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REMARKS,

&c.

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REMARKS  
ON THE  
DIFFERENT SENTIMENTS  
ENTERTAINED IN CHRISTENDOM  
RELATIVE TO  
*The Weekly Sabbath.*

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By ROBERT BURNSIDE, A. M.

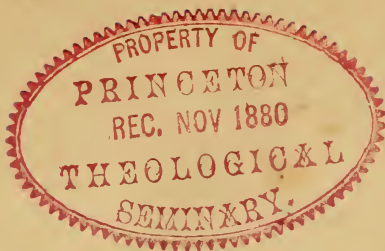
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Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—*1 Thess. 5. 21.*  
Speaking the truth in love.—*Eph. 4. 15.*

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## INTRODUCTION.



THE agreement in sentiment, at least in appearance, respecting the weekly sabbath is so general, not to say universal, among Christians, that there may seem at first view to be no subject for the remarks proposed in the title-page to be made. ‘What occasion,’ it may be asked, ‘is there for observations on differences, which, supposing them ever to have existed, have long ceased to exist? Even admitting that differences in opinion relative to some minute circumstances affecting the topic before mentioned still remain, why should the peace of individuals or of society be disturbed for such trifles?’—In the course of the discussion, however, it will perhaps appear that the Christian world has been and still is greatly divided in opinion relative to the weekly sabbath, and that the points at issue are by no

means inconsiderable. With respect to any inconvenience that may arise from such an investigation, an intelligent, and much more a religious mind, will pause before it determines on refusing to examine a question that involves any point of Christianity, small as it may be comparatively, in order to avoid inconvenience. The dread of error itself should not prevent inquiry after truth; since the danger of adopting it in consequence of discussion is not greater than that of retaining it through declining discussion.

The points on which I propose to consider the differences alluded to, are stated in the following Chapters.

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# REMARKS

ON THE

## DIFFERENT SENTIMENTS,

&c.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *Differences of Opinion concerning the Nature of a Weekly Sabbath.*

THE term *weekly* may be thought unnecessary: but I have inserted it, in order to distinguish the sabbath in question, not only from the monthly and annual sabbaths existing among the Jews, but also from the days, more or fewer of which are kept somewhat like sabbaths by the generality of Christians.

Having premised this, I proceed to the consideration of the subject proposed. The idea of a weekly sabbath, prevalent for the most part among the truly pious of every description who admit that there is one by divine authority—in the British isles at least—is, I believe, the conse-

eration of a day, and of the same day every week, during the whole of the twenty-four hours, to religious purposes—that the business or amusements, lawful on other days, should on this day be refrained from, both publicly and privately; no works of such a description being excepted, save those of ‘necessity and mercy’—that on this day public, as well as private and family worship, should be attended to—that even the subjects selected for conversation, for reading, and for meditation, should either be spiritual, or receive a spiritual improvement—and that the wakeful hours of the night themselves should be subject to regulations similar to those of the day. He who does not aim at submitting to these restrictions, or conform in general to these requisitions, according to the opinion of the people before described, cannot be justly said to keep a weekly sabbath, whatever he may profess to do, or however he himself or others may designate his conduct.

I have the pleasure to avow, that I do most heartily concur with the generality of real Christians among my fellow subjects in this sentiment. My aim is the same as their’s, though none of us, perhaps, are always so successful in it as might be wished. The variety that there is in the religious exercises which claim attention, in succession, on a weekly sabbath, effectually secure both

body and mind from any injurious consequences; and he who conceives of them as insipid or wearisome, has reason to lament the want, not of relaxation or entertainment, but of a well-regulated taste.

But the opinion that has just been given concerning the sanctification due to a weekly sabbath neither has been, nor is, the prevailing one through Christendom. Descriptive as it may be of the manner in which (according to Isaiah 58. 13.) the Jews of old did observe, or ought to have observed, the seventh day, it by no means agrees with the picture of a weekly sabbath, that is drawn in the history of the Christian Church, since the time of the Apostles. Bishop White, who wrote A. D. 1635, justifies the Christians for working on the first day, under the heathen emperors, on the ground of necessity: but neither he nor any other ever produces a single passage from any of the Fathers during this period, in which the necessity is lamented, or in which deliverance from it is sighed after and prayed for. It ceased, however, when the Roman empire became Christian: but still, according to White's quotations, we find such men as St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and Gregory Magnus, (born A. D. 544,) not only conniving at the continuance of such working, but even commending or enjoining it, and that for no less a space than three

centuries.\* Mr. Wright, who wrote in the early part of the last century on the ‘Religious Obser-

\* It is proper to mention, in opposition to these assertions of Bishop White, that Milner, in his *History of the true Church of Christ*, and particularly Morer, in his *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, produces various recommendations, decrees, and edicts, in favour of strictly observing the first day during this period. But though both these writers lived after the Bishop's time, and ought to have known his assertion, yet they never attempt to refute it, or even notice it. That it was true in general, the following references will show.

‘If the Christians in St. Jerome's time, after divine worship on the Lord's day, followed their daily employments, it should be remembered, that this was not done, till the worship was quite over, when they might with innocency enough resume them, because the length of time and the number of hours assigned for piety were not then so well explained as in after ages.’—*Morer*, p. 236.

‘In St. Jerome's time, Christianity had got into the throne, as well as into the empire. Yet for all this, the entire sanctification of the Lord's day proceeded slowly; and that it was the work of time to bring it to perfection appears from the several steps the Church made in her constitution, and from the decrees of emperors and other princes, wherein the prohibitions from servile and civil business advanced by degrees from one species to another, till the day had got a considerable figure in the world.’—*Ibid*.

‘Paula, a devout lady in St. Jerome's time, is represented by him, after coming from church on the Lord's day, as sitting down with the virgins and widows attending her to their daily tasks, which consisted in making garments, and as doing

vation of the Lord's Day,' never once contradicts the citations made from these Fathers by the Bishop for the purpose just stated, nor quotes others in opposition to them, anxious as he is to show, by referring to the quotations of the same learned writer relative to a later period, that the Christians abstained wholly from secular labour on the first day. From the quotations last mentioned, it appears, indeed, that for about five centuries afterwards, that is, between A. D. 600 and A. D. 1100, many orders for abstaining from business on Sunday were given both by princes and councils, as well in the Greek-Roman empire, as in England and France. The same abstinence, however, was required on the other days that were observed by the Church as fasts or feasts;\* and

this on that day for *themselves*, as well as for others that needed them.'—*p.* 235.

'St. Chrysostom gives leave to his audience, after impressing on themselves and their families what they had heard on the Lord's day, to return to their daily employments and trades.'—*p.* 234, 235.

\* If any one of the fasts or feasts referred to was weekly, there was no difference whatever in sanctification between it and Sunday; and if Sunday only was kept weekly, still it was no more a sabbath on that account, than Good Friday, or Christmas-day, would be, were it weekly, instead of annual. There being no other weekly day kept more holy, does not prove that Sunday was kept as a sabbath, but that *no* day was kept as a sabbath.



therefore is no proof of peculiar regard for the day they professed to hold sacred. What effect these orders had, and how long it lasted, does not appear: but in England, so late as Richard the Second's reign, about A. D. 1380, the Parliament met on Sundays to transact business; and in the reign of Henry the Sixth, (A. D. 1440,) the public markets did not continue shut longer than till the close of the afternoon service; and the sports which followed in the evening were practised till the reigns of the Stuarts. The celebrated '*Book of Sports*,' which was published by the order of James the First, and republished by his son Charles the First, professes to allow no more than what had been usual in former reigns; nor is it likely, indeed, that the inhabitants of the northern counties would have given occasion to the former of these monarchs to issue such a proclamation, by complaining of the encroachments made on their pastimes by the Puritans, had they not been considered by them as innovations. Among the Roman Catholics, if not in Protestant countries, the regard professed to be entertained for the *first* day, (though perhaps as great as was paid to any other weekly day,) is still subject to the same defalcations which attended it in England prior to the reign of Henry the Sixth.

Mr. Wright, in the work before referred to, does not exculpate the Protestant states from this charge, which he acknowledges to have been brought against them, as well as against the Roman Catholics. He only in his preface excuses the Hanoverians for spending the Sunday evening in amusements, on the ground that, as he had heard, they abstained from them on the preceding Saturday evening. Mr. W. does not say whether this was done or not done on the Scriptural principle of the evening preceding the morning. If it was not, however true it was that the Hanoverians kept twenty-four hours sacred after six days' labour, it was not equally true that they kept the *whole* of the first day, and that on account of our Lord's resurrection.

Let it not be replied, that whatever may have been the practice of Christendom in this respect, its opinion was conformable to the account already given of what a weekly sabbath ought to be. None of the Fathers or Reformers ever state that any weekly day is enjoined by Scripture on Christians to be sanctified according to Isaiah 58. 13. as already described.

Bishop White, in the work before mentioned, which was patronized by the highest authority both in Church and State, pleads for the laxities in question. Nor have I ever heard of any pub-

lic remonstrances against this weekly species of practical latitudinarianism, drawn up by any considerable number of pious characters in the countries abroad,\* similar to those which have issued from the press in this country, both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters.†

I am not aware that the sanctification due to a weekly sabbath, for which I contend in common with the generality of my pious countrymen, differs at all from that which the Fourth Commandment enjoined upon the Jews, when freed by our Saviour from the superstitious additions which they had made to it. Necessary as it may now be for us, under present circumstances, to kindle a fire and to dress provision on the sabbath, it might not be necessary for the Israelites to perform similar acts on that day, at the time they

\* Mr. Wright, indeed, quotes Witsius as strongly inculcating the proper sanctification of the whole of Sunday. But this learned and pious professor in Holland was cotemporary with the Puritans in England, and a Presbyterian like them. It is not very extraordinary, therefore, that he should act as his brethren did, who were the first that urged the entire consecration of Sunday, as a sabbath.

† Even here, if a judgment may be formed of the regard required by law for the weekly sabbath from the decisions of magistrates, it sustains no injury from private labour that is exercised for amusement, though it does from the same labour, when gain is the object.



were interdicted. I therefore see no just cause for complaining of the restrictions and observances before mentioned as being required by a weekly sabbath. Extravagant as some of the expressions used by the Puritans two hundred years ago concerning the guilt of sabbath-breaking are, I do not know that, with respect to sanctifying the sabbath, they differed materially in sentiment and practice from the pious at large in modern times—at least in this country. Whatever Bishop White may have thought, we should not any of us like, I believe, any more than they would have done, to travel on the sabbath for secular purposes, without necessity—to allow our dependants pastimes on that day—or to let tailors and shoemakers contract a habit of not executing the orders given them before that time: much less should we tolerate the dressing of wedding dinners on the day, or carrying our complaisance toward an invalid who was in bed so far as to engage with the clinic for his diversion, in a game of some sort or another, in the course of the sacred season.

But for what purpose, it may be asked, have I brought forward the different opinions of exalted individuals, both civil and ecclesiastical, relative to the nature of a weekly sabbath, or the practices observable in different nations throughout Christendom, relative to the same matter, since the Christian era? My object is, to show, that

the real observers of a weekly sabbath, notwithstanding appearances and professions have always been, and still are, sufficiently extensive, compose a much smaller mass than is commonly imagined—that even among true Christians, taken as one body, though belonging to different denominations, the number of these real observers is extremely small, and would appear much smaller, perhaps, if individuals would submit to be closely interrogated on the subject—and that those of the real observers who differ from the bulk of their brethren on certain points respecting the weekly sabbath, few as they are, bear, it may be, as great a proportion to them, as they themselves do to the professors of Christianity who observe a weekly sabbath only nominally or partially.

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## CHAPTER II.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the Obligation of a Weekly Sabbath.*

AFTER remarking on the differences of opinion among Christians respecting the nature of a weekly sabbath, I might be expected to discuss, next, the difference of sentiment among them (if

there be a difference) concerning the existence of any weekly sabbath, be its nature what it may. I shall not, however, enter into this question at present; but, taking for granted that the sentiment of there being a day entitled upon just grounds to weekly sanctification more or less is universal, I shall examine the different opinions entertained by Christians respecting the nature of those grounds.

Those who think that there is solid reason for keeping holy a weekly sabbath, are almost universally agreed, that the day itself which is to be sanctified, can be determined only by a positive institution—either divine altogether, or, if human, by divine permission; but that the obligation to keep one day in a week, is moral. In the first of these opinions, namely, that the obligation to sanctify a particular day every week must proceed from a positive appointment of God, I readily concur. Taking, however, the word *moral* not as opposed to *ceremonial*, but in its more general acceptation, as opposed to *positive*,\* I do not think, with some of the Sabatarians, (Christians who observe the seventh or last day of the week as their sabbath,) that

\* A law may be positive, that is dependant on the will of God whether it shall or shall not be, when it is not ceremonial; that is, referring to Christ, as well as dependant on the will of God.

the observance of the seventh or last day of the week is, or ever was, a moral obligation. Whatever I may think of the divinity of its claim to be the weekly sabbath, I cannot consider the secularization of it as being in itself immoral, or found a belief of its perpetuity on the immutability of a moral precept. But for a similar reason, I cannot consider the neglect or violation of the first day, were the proof of its being a sabbath in consequence of a divine institution ever so satisfactory, as immoral in itself, any more than the unnecessary omission of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, by any one who was fit for them.\*

I repeat, then, my entire concurrence with almost the whole of the Christian world, in thinking that the obligation to sanctify a particular day every week is merely positive. But I cannot by any means accede to the opinion—notwithstanding its general prevalence, and its being treated like an axiom or self-evident proposition—namely, that the consecration of the seventh part of time, or of one day in a week, is a moral obligation, in opposition to the idea of a positive institution, which might or might not have been,

\* Properly speaking, the wilful breach of any divine law, whether moral or positive, is immoral; but the term is usually confined to the breach of a moral precept.

which may be temporary, and is alterable. The common, and, I think, the correct and accurate notion of a moral precept, is, an obligation dictated by reason, and discoverable by the light of nature. Now, however manifest it is, by the light of reason, that God should have some part or parts of every day, yet it is not at all manifest from reason that he should ever have a whole day at a time, and still less that such a day should return regularly after a certain period, or after one period rather than after another. There is nothing in the nature of things to direct us to worship and serve God for twenty-four hours, rather than to grant him fewer or more hours together; or to devote a seventh part of our time to him, rather than a sixth or an eighth part; or to devote the same part invariably, rather than different parts. Reason does not prescribe to us the consecration of one day at once, much less of one day merely, in a week, even admitting that a week is a *natural* division of time, and that it consists of seven rather than of ten days. I do not, therefore, consider the obligation of keeping a weekly sabbath on one day, or on another, as being moral, but, if it exists at all, (and I certainly think that it does exist,) as being a positive institution of Heaven.

It has been said, that the morality of sanctifying the seventh part of time consists in the equity



and reasonableness of it. But there is an essential difference between a practice being reasonable, and its being a dictate of reason. A positive institution, if the Divine Being be the Author of it, must be reasonable, even if its reasonableness does not appear. But will any one think it reasonable, detached from its institution?—It is true, the institution of a weekly sabbath does appear reasonable, in itself, as well as on the ground of the divine authority; but not more so, than if the institution had made the week to consist of fewer or more days than seven, or than the requiring a particular day, appears to be. Of course, no superiority of reasonableness in either case would have struck the mind, or have imposed a duty on conscience, without the knowledge of the Deity's positive interference. Were a positive institution of the Deity allowed to be moral on account of its reasonableness, propriety, and equity, there would be no difference between a moral and a positive precept.

It has likewise been said, that the consecration of one day in seven is called for by humanity even toward the brutes, as well as toward the dependant part of the human species, and that it is necessary for the civil and religious interests of mankind. I readily admit the truth of this. It is upon this ground that the reasonableness of the divine institution, now so apparent, stands; and

it is a consideration which abundantly proves the divine wisdom and goodness, in positively instituting (as will be shown afterwards) a particular day for it every week, as also the importance of our observing it. But there is not the least reason to suppose that nature did or ever would of itself have suggested the idea to man, without such an institution. Notwithstanding the effect produced among the ancients by a tradition of it, and which, there is reason to believe, never wholly ceased after the tradition itself was in a great measure forgotten, the importance of sanctifying one day in a week, whether in whole or in part, for the good both of man and beast, was never reflected upon before the Christian era. The idea was entertained in consequence of knowing that there was such a divine institution. The beneficial results of it were discovered by experience and observation, not anticipated by speculation. Indeed, though the holy and happy effects of sanctifying, to one extent or to another, one day in a week, are generally admitted in the Christian world, yet the aversion of the 'carnal mind' to it on account of its apparent austerities, and the serious evils arising to individuals and to society from the extensive abuse of it, are such, that were it not for the positive institution of it by divine authority, it is extremely questionable whether man's regard for his own benefit,

or for the benefit of those dependant on him, whether rational or irrational, would have led him to an appointment of this nature. There are numbers of people, (and among them, too, some not a little eminent for intelligence, rank, and character in society,) who, so far from appearing likely to think of, to introduce, or to promote such an institution, can scarcely endure or submit to it, (though they acknowledge its existence by divine authority,) not only in a religious, but even in a civil or moral view. They do not, perhaps, wholly abstain from business in private; and however they may occupy an hour or two in public devotion, or refrain from some pleasures, yet they suffer other pleasures to allow their dependants, whether rational or irrational, little leisure for rest, and themselves still less for religion. It is doubtful whether the pious themselves, in the absence of Scripture, would ever have thought the Scriptural sanctification of a day necessary for devotion, and much less for morality, humanity, or civilization.

It is true, the public worship of God is a dictate of reason. But with respect to the day, the hour, the length of the service, and its recurrence, (except in general that it should be frequent,) reason determines nothing universal or constant. It leaves these points to the convenience and suffrage of the future worshippers. Still less is there



any thing in nature that obliges them to employ any of the days on which they worship publicly wholly in religion. Nor need the season for it return after any particular interval, or statedly. When a ruler calls upon a nation to assemble for public worship on a civil account, or on any account in which Revelation is not supposed to interfere, he does not think himself obliged to require them to sanctify a whole day: he likewise calls upon them occasionally, not statedly; or if the latter, annually, not weekly.

The obligation, therefore, if there be any, to keep a weekly sabbath at all, as well as to keep a certain day, seems to me to be entirely positive. Of course I think, that neither the observers of the seventh day, nor those of the first day, would be warranted in charging each other with sabbath-breaking, and much less (as explained before) with immorality, merely because they do not keep each others' sabbath. No one, in my opinion, is justly liable to the charge of sabbath-breaking, except he neglects or violates the day which he professes to account the sabbath, or except he cannot with truth affirm that he has made proper inquiry which day God has required to be kept, and that he acts agreeably to the conviction of his own mind. Whether he has really so inquired or not, can be ascertained only by his own conscience.

Positive, however, properly speaking, as the obligation to observe any weekly sabbath whatever, as well as a certain day, cannot but be, in my opinion, I am not unwilling to call it moral in a qualified sense, on account of several extraordinary circumstances, which, as appears from Revelation, attend it: such as that it was instituted as early as there was any human being to observe it—that it was made known as soon as any precept can be known, which is, strictly speaking, moral—that it was discovered in the same way as moral obligations were themselves at first discovered; that is to say, by Revelation—that it was founded on a reason peculiarly great and important, and which, like moral duties, concerns all mankind in all ages and places, namely, the Deity's rest after the Creation—and, finally, that it was placed by divine authority, not merely among other precepts, some of which are moral, and others positive, because the purpose for which they were mentioned made it of importance to separate them, but in the middle of a code that is confessedly moral, in opposition to other codes which are as confessedly positive. Should any one think that the obligation to observe a weekly sabbath is entitled to the high and weighty designation of moral for these reasons, and that it was intended by the Divine Legislator to be so

considered and treated by mankind, I own that though I cannot admit the designation to be its undoubted right, yet I am far from objecting to the Fourth Commandment's having it, when the claim is made for it, or allowed by others.\* But then, in admitting the obligation of keeping a weekly sabbath to be moral on such grounds, it will be indispensably necessary to admit the morality of keeping the seventh or last day of the week, since (as will be proved hereafter) those grounds apply solely to that day, and not to the seventh part of time abstractedly—they relate to that day directly, and to the seventh part of time only by necessary consequence, since it was impossible to consecrate the former without consecrating the latter at the same time. The last day of the first week was the subject of the institution, and nothing else; nor does the reason assigned for it accord with any thing else.

I have only to remark further, before I conclude this Chapter, that though I consider the observance of a weekly sabbath, including the particular day to be kept, as a positive institution, and not, properly speaking, a moral duty, yet it does not necessarily follow, in my opinion, that the institution is temporary. It only fol-

\* Upon the same principle, sabbath-breaking, as before explained, may not improperly be termed immorality.

lows, that man would not have been obliged, by the law of nature, to keep a weekly sabbath, had there been no positive institution, and that the blessed God could revoke the institution, with or without a view to the making a different one, if he pleased. Whether he has done either, or not, I shall not now inquire. I shall merely remark, at present, that if what I stated should be proved, namely, that the seventh part of time is no otherwise instituted than as the seventh day is instituted, the seventh part of time will of course be abrogated, whenever the seventh day is abrogated; nor can it ever be renewed, except by another positive institution, that appoints it either abstractedly, or in consequence of appointing another day. In such a case, the new institution would stand upon its own ground, and would have no occasion to seek authority, confirmation, or explanation, from the abrogated one; nor could it derive any one of these advantages from that quarter, if it wanted help ever so much.

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## CHAPTER III.

*Differences of Opinion concerning the Antiquity of the Seventh Day Weekly Sabbath.*

MANY learned and pious writers, who observe the first day as the weekly sabbath, are of opinion, that the passage in Gen. 2. 2, 3. relative to the Divine Being's blessing and sanctifying the sabbath day, which was the day after the Creation, is an anticipation of the Fourth Commandment, expressing what was to take place, not directly, but a long time after, namely, when the Jews arrived in the Wilderness. Of course, the holders of this opinion do not think, with the generality of Christians and myself, that the observance of a weekly sabbath on one day, or on another, is of serious importance to the interests of humanity, of civilization, and of religion. For if they do think this, they must also think that the duty must have been known as early as the existence of man and of human society, and that therefore, as it could not be known by reason, (as had already been proved,) a positive institution of the Deity, which was absolutely requisite to the knowledge of it, in being announced just after the Creation, was not brought forward a moment before it was wanted; being wanted



immediately, as well as at the distance of two thousand years afterwards.

It must, indeed, be admitted, that the older the world grew, and the more populous it became, the more it would need an appointment that tended so materially to its civil and religious improvement. But there were considerable nations long before the time of Moses; and though not tribes, there were individuals and domestic society from the very beginning. These, notwithstanding their inferiority in largeness and number to the bodies of people that existed at a later period, were far too important to be passed by, since they needed the benefits of the sabbath, as well as those who lived in the more populous ages that were to follow.

Another observation proper to be made, concerning the holders of the opinion that Gen. 2. 2, 3. contains only an anticipation of the Fourth Commandment, is, that they at least consider, agreeably to the general sentiment and my own, the seventh day which is appointed by that Commandment as being the same in rotation with that which is mentioned in Genesis. Were this not the case, the latter would not be an anticipation of the commandment, but a different institution. This, indeed, is the opinion of some great and good men; but whether upon just grounds or not, it is not yet my business to ex-

amine. All I wish to observe just now upon the point is, that the opinion of the institution in Genesis being nothing but an anticipation of the Fourth Commandment, and the opinion that the seventh day in that commandment is not the same in rotation with the seventh day which God sanctified after resting upon it at the close of the Creation, cannot both be maintained at the same time by the same individual.

For my own part, I concur in sentiment with Mr. Wright and Dr. Jennings, who wrote in the last century, and with many more respectable observers of the first day, who think that the weekly sabbath was instituted by the Creator at the close of his great and good work of creation, as also that it was intended to be regarded, and was regarded, immediately. I think, too, with Dr. Jennings, and many more, that it was the seventh or last day of the first week, and no other, that was appointed for the purpose. I cannot accede to the opinion of Professor Wallis, of Oxford, who wrote on the Christian Sabbath in 1692, and with whom Mr. Wright agrees, that the passage (Gen. 2. 2, 3.) only institutes one day of the week after six days' labour, without determining which day, or any day in particular. The order in which the seventh day is introduced, appears to me to show, beyond dispute, that it was the last day of

the week only that was consecrated by the Divine Legislator; and the reason assigned for its consecration agrees with no other. Neither was the seventh part of time first consecrated, and then the seventh day, but the seventh day alone. The consecration of the seventh part of time only follows indirectly, and as a necessary consequence of the institution: it is not the subject of the institution itself, nor renders it a matter of indifference which day of the week is kept, nor gives a latitude to man to transfer the weekly sabbath from the seventh or last day of the week to some other.

Would any one who thinks that the first day is now the weekly sabbath by divine authority, on account of our Lord's resurrection, and that it was called 'Lord's Day' for that reason, allow that it signifies no more than the appointment of the seventh part of time, leaving the day of the week that was to be kept to human discretion and choice? The divine appointment of the seventh or last day of the week for holy purposes, together with the reason for it, must surely be allowed by the most confident and zealous supporters of the first day, on the authority (as they imagine) of the New Testament, to be expressed in as plain and definite language as that in which the first day, (and not merely the seventh part of time,) together with the facts respect-



ing it, is expressed in the texts on which they rely.

In my opinion, there never was nor can be a law more plainly enacted, or more explicit in regard to its nature, and the time when it was to take effect, than the divine institution recorded Gen. 2. 2, 3. The seventh day, on which God ‘rested from all the work which God created and made,’ could be no other than the last day of the first week. The expression, ‘God sanctified it,’ must mean that he set it apart for his worship and service. Finally, when he is said to have ‘blessed it,’ I know not what else can be intended, except that he proposed to render it a day peculiarly happy for man. Considering the opinion I entertain concerning the light in which the ancient Patriarchs and the Gentiles viewed this day, and concerning the day which the Jews observed for so many ages in their own country, and which they still continue to observe, (an opinion which I shall have occasion in the course of this work to support,) I can have no doubt of God’s having fulfilled the gracious promise which I think is implied in his ‘blessing the seventh day;’\* and though the state of Christen-

\* The Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom on account of the residence of the ark there ; and no doubt substantial effects followed the gracious act. But they are only hinted at

dom in general (so far as it is known) has for many centuries exhibited an appearance not very suitable to this most benevolent and interesting act of the Deity at the commencement of human existence and of time, so far as relates to the division of it into weeks, yet it is by no means too late for him to fulfil his promise, and that in a most extensive and striking manner.\*

The act of God in sanctifying this day is not synonymous with, or another way of expressing, his having 'rested' upon it. His sanctifying it was the effect, of which his resting upon it is declared to be the cause. It is prospective, and refers to some line of conduct, internal and external, that was to be observed henceforward toward that day. By whom was this to be observed, and who was to be the object of the peculiar blessings to be conferred on this highly-favoured day? It cannot be thought that God proposed to render homage to himself, or to bless

indirectly and obscurely, where we find himself, his brethren, and his sons, employed as attendants at the house of God, as leaders in the band of sacred choristers, or as keepers of the holy treasure.

\* If the opinions that the seventh day was not kept before the time of Moses, and that the one kept by the Jews was not the weekly return of the first seventh day, be correct, the day has not yet been blessed, in effect; and thus its future blessedness is rendered more certain.

himself. It can only be a creature for whom it is proper to perform the one, and that stands in need of the other. What creature could this be, but man? who, however justly ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,’ on occasion of the Creation, was the only intelligent being who was immediately and deeply interested in it.

I consider, therefore, both the duty and the privilege to have been intended by the Divine Legislator and Benefactor particularly for man, and to take place *forthwith*, since neither the sanctification nor the benediction are mentioned a moment sooner than they were wanted. Neither were they, as already intimated, to be confined to the day on which God rested.\* Both were to be repeated on the subsequent seventh days in rotation, since propriety and the interest of man required such a repetition, as much as they did the commencement. Both, in fine,

\* Were the first seventh day alone intended to be holy, and not its weekly return also, it would not be the day itself that was sanctified, but a certain day of a month that in a certain year fell on the last day of the first week. The historical event, however remarkable, could have been of no use in practice to Adam and to his posterity. The first-day Christians do not consider the first days mentioned in the New Testament alone as sacred, but the weekly return of the first day also.

were intended to be continued, till orders should be received from the Divine Being for their discontinuance.—In this sentiment I am happy in concurring with Dr. Jennings, and other learned and pious advocates for the Paradisaical Sabbath.

Such, according to my judgment, is the sense of this important passage. It does not appoint first one day in seven generally, and then the last day of the week in particular, but the last day of the week only. It does not mean, as Mr. Wright states, primarily or principally, and much less solely, that the seventh part of time was to be kept sacred; but that the seventh day in succession from the day on which God rested should be so kept. There is no utility any more than justice in the representation made by the writer just mentioned, that the institution required, and merely required, the seventh day after six days' labour on the part of man to be kept. The Divine Being had indeed worked six days preceding that rest which is the reason assigned for his distinguishing the day so highly as he did. But man certainly had not worked six days prior to the first sabbath which he was called upon to spend in the worship and service of that Being, to whom he owed his ability both to work and to enjoy. From that time, of course, the sabbath would or might be, after six

days of man's labour: but the series of weekly sabbaths was fixed; nor was he at liberty to alter the day by keeping two sabbaths together, (and thus making the sabbath that followed the next six intervening days of labour fall one day sooner or later than the regular day,) or by any other expedient.

To these observations it has been replied, that it was impossible for mankind to regard the institution according to the sense just given of it. But I can by no means acquiesce in the conclusiveness of the arguments that have been brought to prove the impossibility.

Bishop White thinks that the weekly sabbath could not have been given to our first parents in Paradise before the fall, because they underwent no labour, had no servants, nor were in any of the other circumstances supposed by the Fourth Commandment. But it is not a prerequisite to a man's keeping a sabbath, that he should have servants, or follow a secular calling. If Adam did not till the ground during the state of innocence, there is little doubt that he and his wife employed their time in the study of the objects that surrounded them, and more particularly of themselves; and though the researches of the natural philosopher have a religious tendency, and ought to issue in piety, yet as they are not acts of piety in themselves, and (as ex-



perience and observation too well prove) are capable of existing separate from it, they might very well form the worldly occupation of our first parents on the working days. The discoveries thence made would no doubt have a religious influence on their private thoughts, their conversation with each other, their conduct, and their acts of devotion, whether secret or social, through the week; but more especially on the sacred day that closed it, when it would be their sole business to contemplate and adore the divine perfections, and to apply their knowledge of them to proper purposes.

The supposed impossibility, therefore, of our first parents keeping the weekly sabbath in a state of holiness and happiness, seems to me to be without ground. Nor does another objection appear to be better founded, that is raised by the same learned prelate, by Dr. Wallis, and by many others, against the credibility of the seventh day's having been enjoined upon the first human pair and their posterity, on account of the day's not happening during the same period of absolute time, under meridians considerably remote from the spot about which Paradise is usually supposed to have been situated, and from each other—as also on account of the peculiar circumstances attending the inhabitants of the polar regions. I am surprised that any one who professes to advocate

the cause of the first day, should bring forward an objection to the divine institution of the seventh day, which, if solid, must have equally prevented the institution of the first day, and indeed of any day. But it strikes me, that the inference to be drawn from the circumstances mentioned in the objection is,—not that the words under consideration do not contain a precept, when they so manifestly appear to contain one,—or that they do not mean what they cannot but mean, if there be any meaning in language,—or that mankind at the beginning did not think the precept binding upon them, when they knew nothing, any more than the common people do at this day, that should, in consequence of the progress now made in the study of geography and astronomy, make them think otherwise; but that the facts, now they are discovered, form no material obstacle to it. The assumption wants proof, that the Divine Being would not order mankind to keep a particular day, because the day would commence and terminate sooner or later in some countries than in others. The circumstance does not prevent his Majesty from ordering his birthday to be kept in the East and West Indies on the same day on which it is kept in England, or a bill drawn upon a resident in a country situated under a distant meridian from being paid the day on which it becomes due. Why, then, should

it prevent the institution in question on the part of the Divine Being? It does not indeed follow that God would do so, because man acts in this manner: but it follows that his doing so is not impossible; and that there is no reason for interpreting Gen. 2. 2, 3. in a way different from the natural import of the words, on such a ground.\*

With respect to the great mass of places and persons, the objection in question is futile. One weekly sabbath could not differ from another in absolute time more than twelve hours at furthest; and in the generality of cases the difference would not amount to a couple of hours, if so much. They differed scarcely any thing, till emigrations took place east or west from the neighbourhood of Paradise before the flood, and from Mount Ararat after the flood. Even when these emigrations did take place, the differences were inconsiderable, till the removals were to very remote distances. If it be asked what was to be done by the emigrants relative to the day for the sabbath, whenever that should return, I answer, even that which has always been done, and still is done, by the moderns in such a case—

\* The meridian of Jerusalem is not the same with that of Sinai; yet the Fourth Commandment required the Jews to keep the seventh day in the former place, as well as in the latter.



namely, to call that the evening of what we now call the sixth day, (and if any of them did not know which was the sixth day, through losing their reckoning after setting out, that was their fault,) when darkness commenced at the place where they were. This would be the beginning of the sabbath, and the end of it would be the commencement of darkness on the day following. The interval would be their seventh day now, according to the course of nature and providence, however it might differ less or more in time from the one they left behind them.

What the ancients actually did in the case of emigrating with respect to their computation of time, no one can now tell. But I may venture to affirm, I believe, that the moderns have acted, and still act, in substance, as just stated, altering their time-pieces according to the meridian of their new residences. The Jews and the Christians, in keeping their respective weekly sabbaths in this country, do not keep precisely the weekly returns of the same days which their forefathers or predecessors kept, and which they themselves would now keep were they in Asia. Yet regardless of the difference, and most of them totally ignorant of it, they both think that they each keep the same days in succession which the professors of their respective religions kept in the east many centuries ago. And so

they do, so far as the course of nature and providence allows them. Nor do they either of them imagine, or have they cause to imagine, that the foreknowledge of such a circumstance on the part of the Deity, rendered it impossible for him to fix or to continue a particular day for the weekly sabbath, or that they having become acquainted with it, are now at liberty to exchange it for any other day that fashion or interest may recommend.\*

The people of Europe, and those of America, frequently remove their residences from the one to the other, without ever thinking that in consequence of these changes they do not sanctify the same day weekly that they used to sanctify; nor are they thought to keep a different one by others, notwithstanding the fact, that in such cases the former begin their sabbath some hours later, and the latter some hours earlier, than they did before. Travellers to a distance east or west, whether by sea or land, alter their time-pieces, as was said before, to the hour of the place where they happen to be, whenever there is occasion, and reverse the alteration on their return, or in the course of returning, without ever

\* In speaking of the ancient Christians as considering the first day to be the weekly *sabbath*, agreeably to Isa. 58. 13. the author delivers the popular sentiment, not his own.

supposing that such changes can or ought to interfere with their fixing on or adhering to particular days agreed on with those left behind them for transacting important business. Supposing two individuals to go round the world in opposite directions, and to gain or lose a day, so that on their return to the same spot there should be a difference of two days between them, I have no doubt that they would give up, the one his Monday, and the other his seventh day, if they found it to be Sunday at home, without any obstruction, either on their own part, or on the part of others; and whatever concern Dr. Wallis, in his 'Discourse on the Christian Sabbath,' p. 80, professes to feel for Sir Francis Drake, on his return to England after sailing round the world, respecting the mode in which he and his friends would settle their differences about time, I will venture to affirm that the gallant admiral and they settled them without the smallest embarrassment on either side. Yet no one, I believe, will agree with the worthy doctor in thinking, on account of this incident, the Deity could not appoint a particular day, whether the seventh or the first day, for the weekly sabbath, and expect it to be kept, too, without the liberty of making a transfer.

During the parts of the year that the inhabitants of the polar regions are in total light or in

total darkness for many days and weeks together, they certainly cannot measure time by the natural means by which we can. But admitting that they have no other mode of distinguishing days and weeks, so as to enable them to keep the seventh day sabbath, it is by no means certain that their peculiar situation would prevent an institution which regards the human race at large. A Baptist does not think that there is no such divine ordinance as that of baptism, (that is, in his opinion, the immersing the whole body,) because there may be a few instances in which persons making a credible profession of their faith could not be baptized without endangering their lives. Nor is it an objection to the existence of a weekly sabbath by divine appointment, that no day whatever can at any time be wholly kept, because there is no one on which the occasion for 'works of necessity and mercy' does not occur.

To proceed. Another objection has been taken against the Deity's having appointed a particular day to be observed by mankind in general, from the present natural, and from the artificial modes of computing time, both ancient and modern. It is imagined, that the three first days not having been measured by the absence and the presence of the sun, as every day has been measured since, no seventh day subsequent to the first has a right

to sanctification, on the ground of being its proper representative; not happening after a portion of time equal to that after which the first seventh day happened, but after a space of time that was either longer or shorter. It is likewise imagined, that all mankind cannot sanctify the return of the day which was the seventh day in Paradise, because some of them reckoning the beginning of their days, not from the beginning of darkness, but from either the noon before, or the midnight after, their seventh days commenced neither with that particular day, nor with each other. I shall have occasion to discuss these objections more fully, when I come to consider the question concerning the commencement of the weekly sabbath according to Scripture. At present, I reply to the first of these objections, that there is no proof of the three first days of the first week being respectively different in length from the four days that followed them. The Deity knew when the twenty-four hours were completed, as well without as with the sun, and therefore could make them precisely of the same length as the others. It appears that he did so, by the sacred historian calling the three first *days*, as well as the four last, without noticing that the word was used in different senses. Consequently the first week did not differ in length from any one that followed.



As to the other objection, I reply, that men knew, at the beginning, that the commencement of darkness was the original sign of a new day's commencing, and that the commencement of the weekly sabbath was signified by the same sign as the commencement of any other day. They were able, and it was their duty, in their emigrations, to preserve the knowledge of the day, be it which of the seven it might, and likewise of the sign when a new day commenced. However lawful it might be for them to alter the commencement of the six working days, it does not appear that they were under any necessity, or that they had any authority, to alter the commencement of the seventh day sabbath. If any of the nations, through their own fault, or that of their ancestors, lost their reckoning, they were able to recover it by means of the Jews, among whom (as I shall show in the proper place) the knowledge of the true seventh day has always been preserved.

Finally, the argument against the divine institution of the Paradisaical sabbath, or at least against the obligation to regard it immediately, drawn from the supposed silence of sacred and profane history on the subject of its actual observance, appears to me to be equally inconclusive. A law may have really existed, and may continue to exist, even though no one should keep it,



or ever have kept it. Besides, it does not follow, from there being no account of any one's keeping a law, that no one ever did keep it. Would it follow that there had not been a state of perfect innocence and happiness, if the Scriptural account of the means by which the fatal change was effected were wanting, and we merely knew (according to the Grecian fable) that the gold was become iron, without possessing any information how it became so? Whether there actually be no records of a weekly sabbath having been kept, prior to the time of Moses, I shall not now inquire. The important advantages generally acknowledged (as already stated) to attach to such an observance to man and beast, to individuals and to society, both in a civil and in a religious view, show that it could not be postponed, without delaying for a time the holy and benevolent purposes of the Deity in the institution, and without injury to his creatures in this lower world. The constant recurrence of the human mind, for instance, during twenty-four hours every week, to the time when there was no visible world, and when the course of nature had no existence—to the dependance of man himself, and of all around him, on the Divine Being, had a wonderful tendency to compensate the disadvantages of not, for the most part, beholding him present and acting; and if this was

the case while man was often favoured with visible, or at least audible, manifestations of the Deity, and had no temptations either internal or external, such as he at present meets with, to disregard the Supreme, how much more was it so, when these manifestations were in a great measure withdrawn, and when ‘the carnal mind was enmity against God.’\*

Though these considerations would never in all probability have occurred to man, or proved the occasion of his keeping a weekly sabbath of his own accord, either at the beginning of time or afterwards, yet they abundantly justify the Deity’s instituting one to be kept on the last day of the week, declare his intention respecting its immediately taking effect, and show that it was the duty and interest of man, as well as practicable for him, to comply instantly with the will of his Maker, even if he did not comply with it.

\* The topics just adverted to were at first the only ones that could engage his attention; but in consequence of the fall, others infinitely greater became interesting to him, and happily for him, had a real existence. It is remarkable, that prior to human apostasy, there was no act of religion founded on Revelation prescribed to man, except that of sanctifying the seventh day weekly, unless the negative one of abstaining from eating of the tree of knowledge, may be accounted such.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Differences of Opinion concerning the Regard paid by the Patriarchs and the Gentiles to the Seventh Day Weekly Sabbath.*

It is not known, I believe, what the opinion of the Jews who lived before our Lord's time was, concerning the conduct of the Patriarchs prior to Moses, and that of the Gentiles, relative to the weekly sabbath. But some of them since, in conjunction with the oldest Christian Fathers, and not a few great and good characters in modern times, have (it is said) expressed it to be their sentiment, that the ancients had no sabbath. The chief reason assigned for their thinking so is, that there is no account of such an observance, either in sacred or in profane history. This alleged silence, however, is denied by Dr. Jennings, and others as respectable for learning and piety—perhaps for number, as their opponents; and I own that I am of their opinion.

I have already observed, that there being no instance recorded of a law's having been obeyed, cannot disprove the existence or importance of the law itself, where there is sufficient proof of both. That this is really the case of the institu-

tion (Gen. 2. 2, 3.) relative to the seventh-day weekly sabbath, I distinctly showed in the last Chapter. It was there proved, likewise, that obedience was practicable, and that it was the duty and the interest of man instantly to obey it. This suffices for establishing the obligation, whether it was regarded or not. But the apparent non-observance of a law may be owing to the want of records. What an infinite multitude of facts must have existed, of which there is no record! The history of barbarous ages and countries, and particularly ancient history, are almost blanks for want of such records. What a variety of causes may prevent their having been written, or occasion their loss or destruction after they were written! Silent, therefore, as history may be on the subject, it is reasonable to suppose that that was really done, which, considering the circumstances, it was reasonable to do; and this is the case respecting obedience to a law like that of the weekly seventh-day sabbath, which, as has been shown, really existed, and which, being noways impracticable, it was both the duty and interest of man on whom it was enjoined to obey. With respect to our first parents before the fall, I do not see how their non-observance of the sabbath, at that time, could be compatible with the state of innocence which they must then be supposed to possess.

With regard to there being no mention in the two oldest books in the Bible (those of Genesis and Job) of the Patriarchs' keeping the sabbath, the concise manner in which they give the history of between two and three thousand years forbade their noticing any weekly routine, such as this would have been, except something extraordinary and of general interest occurred in it; and that an extraordinary occurrence of importance enough to the world at large to deserve insertion in such a narrative was not very likely to happen on that occasion, the experience of every individual and of every Christian society that observes or records whatever passes on the sabbath that is singular and of moment, sufficiently proves. He who carefully peruses the account of pious characters contained in the books under consideration, will see that no act of religion is told concerning any of them, except something remarkable attaches to it. Thus we are informed, more than once, that 'Abraham built an altar unto the Lord,' because he did it in a foreign and in an idolatrous country, or because he did it near a new place of abode. At other times, the piety of the Patriarchs is recorded, on account of its being uncommon, and on account of the peculiar regard paid to it by the Deity. For the want of some such extraordinary circumstances I imagine it was, that after



Abel's death there is not a word said concerning the religion of any of the Antediluvian Patriarchs, except Enoch and Noah, though no one doubts, I suppose, that they were pious. The memoirs of most godly men, not only in the books of Genesis and Job, but also in other parts of Scripture, were not intended, like those in modern biography, to give complete views of religious characters, and therefore omit many particulars concerning them, which, however interesting in a private, domestic, or local view, were not of general importance. In fine, though social worship is thought to have been early and commonly practised by the Patriarchs before the flood, yet nothing of it was known from Inspiration, (except the words 'then began men to call upon the name of the Lord' were intended to indicate it,) till the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude were written; nor would these have noticed what they do of Noah and of Enoch, had they not been led to do so by the resemblance of many professors of religion in their time, to people who lived in the time of the aforesaid Patriarchs.\*

\* The sabbath is seldom mentioned in the Old Testament, even after the time of Moses. In the days of the most pious rulers the Jews ever had, such as Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, it is never no-



The non-existence of any nation professing the true religion prior to the time of the Jews, (for the subjects of Melchisedec, ‘Priest of the Most High God,’ were little more than a tribe,) and consequently of an opportunity for celebrating the weekly sabbath by numerous assemblies performing divine service on the day, is stated as another objection to the idea of the institution’s having been regarded in the infancy of the world. But I must remark, that however important a nation may be to the keeping a sabbath with eclat, it is by no means necessary to the keeping one at all. The same thing in substance may take place where there is only a tribe, though with an appearance far less striking. Nay in a single family there may be social prayer and religious instruction, by means of reading, addressing, and conversing. In short, an individual may worship God in retirement, and direct his thoughts, words, and actions, to piety, through the day appropriated to religion, privately, when he cannot manifest a spirit of devotion publicly; and though private devotion cannot have the magnificence and splendour which often accom-

ticed as being personally regarded by them but twice, namely, in the 42nd and 92nd Psalms. The few other times at which it is mentioned seem to have been only because the public and the nation were concerned.

pany public worship, yet it is not less suitable or essential, under God, to the sanctification of a day, than the other. 'Cast down' as 'the soul' of the Psalmist David might be 'within him' when he could not 'go to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude of them that kept holy-day,' there is little doubt that in the spiritual state of mind in which he appears to have been at this time, he kept the sabbath full as well for the purpose of devotion, though not of comfort, in his constrained absence from the tabernacle, as when he was favoured with an opportunity of approaching the 'holy oracle.'\* In fine, as little force seems to me to be in the objection to the actual observance of the weekly sabbath by the ancients, taken from the supposed impossibility of its being kept by the Israelites, when they were 'in the house of bondage.' Admitting that the Egyptians knew nothing of such a day by tradition, (the contrary to which is asserted by a host of writers,) or that knowing of it and keeping it themselves, their

\* The observations that have been made respecting the practicability of sanctifying the sabbath before the time of the Jews, are as applicable to the mode of worship under the Patriarchal, as to that under the Christian dispensation. For there were private sacrifices, and sacrifices offered up in families, as well as public and national sacrifices.

avarice and inhumanity, though to their own detriment, would not allow their unhappy slaves to do the same, this compelled secularization of the day would have been only 'a work of necessity;' it would not prove that the disposition of the oppressed people could not be devotional, or that they did not manifest such a disposition, so far as they had opportunity in secret and in conversation. No one who observes the first day now, thinks that the Christians after the apostolic age, and before the time of Constantine the Great, did not keep it, notwithstanding Bishop White tells us that most of them were employed by their heathen masters, on that day, in digging mines, rowing galleys, draining marshes, and in every kind of mean and laborious service.

The remarks hitherto made, proceed upon the ground that the silence of history respecting any regard paid by the ancients to the weekly sabbath, is absolute and total. But I must now observe, that there are various circumstances which strongly indicate, that the Patriarchs before the time of Moses did really keep the seventh day sabbath. After what has been said concerning the evidence of its institution by the Creator, and his intention that it should be regarded immediately, agreeably to what might be expected from the conviction generally prevalent of the importance of a weekly sabbath both to

man and beast, it may seem incredible that these pious men should not keep it, provided they knew of it. Now that they did know of it, cannot, in my opinion, be reasonably doubted, since it appears that they knew of the division of time into weeks.

The frequent use of the period of days which compose a week in the Patriarchal history, as also of the number *seven* in preference to other numbers, in the case of animals, and in other cases in which a selection was wanted, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, without supposing that there is a reference to the number of days employed in the Creation, which, with the divine institution of the sabbath, composed the first week, and was the origin of that division of time. Indeed the term *week* is expressly used (Gen. 29. 27.) in the compact made with Jacob by his uncle, which would not have been, had not the word been intelligible and familiar to Jacob.\*

The most direct and positive proof, however, of the institution in Gen. 2. 2, 3. being observed by the Jews, and consequently by their ancestors the Patriarchs, from whom they must have de-

\* If *week* had originated in its being nearly the fourth part of a month, or in the moon's quarters, the term would have occurred in the Greek classics, as well as the terms *month* and *year*, which does not appear to be the case.

rived the knowledge and practice of it, before the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, is contained in Exod. 16. at the time they were in the wilderness of Sin, being not yet arrived at Sinai. But as there are those who contend that the sabbath kept then was not on the seventh day which was the regular return of the day on which God rested in Paradise, I shall defer the consideration of this proof to a future occasion.

I proceed to inquire whether any regard was paid by the ancient Gentiles to the seventh day sabbath. Even if it was not, I have already shown that it was as much their duty and interest to pay such a regard, as it was the duty and interest of that race of people, which, in common with themselves descending from Adam and Noah, composed the ancestors of the Jewish nation. But respecting their actual conduct, that is, whether they really kept it, or did not keep it, there is the same diversity of opinion among authors, that there is concerning the question which has just been discussed. The same writers who with Dr. Jennings maintain that the Patriarchs kept the Paradisaical sabbath, maintain likewise that the Gentiles kept it; and I am of the same opinion—at least that they did so for a while. They had the same regard for the number *seven* which the Patriarchs had, as appears from the number of altars, bullocks, and rams,



which Balak the king of Moab prepared at the instance of Balaam. There is, therefore, the same reason for thinking that they knew of the division of time into weeks, with its origin, and were accustomed so to divide it, as that the Patriarchs had this knowledge and custom. Laban, who in the passage before quoted used the word *week*\* in his conversation with Jacob, did not reside in the family or in the country of the Patriarchs Abraham and Isaac; he was also an idolater. Correct, therefore, as Dr. Wallis may be in his opinion, that among the Gentiles who were contemporary with the Jews in Canaan, the period of seven days, called a week, was utterly unknown, he is certainly mistaken in thinking that they did not know it in the time of the Patriarchs.

Thus does it appear that the ancient Gentiles did know of the week, and that they respected both it, and the number of which its days consist. This, however, it may be said they might do, without knowing any thing of the origin, namely, the six days employed in the Creation, with the divine institution of the seventh day sabbath at the close of them, or showing the smallest

\* The Hebrew word rendered *week* (Gen. 29.) is the same that is rendered so under the Jewish economy; nor is there any other for week in that language, except it be *sabbath*.



degree of sacred regard for that day. Let us, then, examine such remains of antiquity as tend to reflect light upon these latter points. Dr. Wallis thinks that Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived toward the close of the second century after Christ, first collected these passages from the Greek writers; but he could not have collected them all, if Dr. W. has enumerated all he did collect. What Clemens himself thought of the matter in question does not appear from the learned Professor. But according to him, this ancient Father roundly asserts that the Gentiles derived all their religious knowledge from the Jews. Many, I believe, have avowed the same sentiment. I cannot say that this is my opinion. I think a distinction should be made between the persons and things recorded in Scripture that existed before, and those that existed after the time of Moses, respecting the means by which the Greeks became acquainted with them. With regard to the latter, they most probably did owe their knowledge to their intercourse with Judea and its inhabitants. But it is as probable that they derived their knowledge of the former from tradition, the source of which must be looked for in the individuals who were their ancestors, as well as the ancestors of the Jews. They must have heard tell of many striking and interesting particulars through Ham and Japhet, as the He-

brews did through Shem and his descendants. In this way they heard of Tubal-cain and Noah; of Japhet and Ham, whom they called respectively Vulcan and Fo, Japetus and Jupiter Hammon. Hence they became acquainted with the Creation, the state of innocence and happiness, the fall of man, the deluge, and the preservation of Noah and his family: which particulars are plainly referred to in their account of order rising out of chaos, and in the fables of the Four Ages, of Deucalion and Pyrrha, and of Saturn and his Three Sons, who divided the universe among them. From the same source, in my opinion, and not from the Jews, they derived their knowledge of the division of time into weeks, with the cause of it, and the sacred regard due to the seventh or last day of the week.\*

\* The defeat of the giants who attempted to scale heaven, as also the dethronement and expulsion from Olympus of Saturn, which make so conspicuous a figure in the heathen mythology, seem evidently to refer to the history of the apostate angels. But the knowledge of these particulars could not have been obtained by the ancient heathen from the Jews, the latter having no better means of knowing them than themselves; because the Scriptures in that stage of Revelation contained no information on the subject. I must observe, too, in general respecting the knowledge supposed to be derived by the Gentiles from the Jews, that before the Babylonish captivity, it related to customs themselves, rather

I now proceed to bring forward and examine the passages which the researches of the learned have succeeded in collecting from ancient writers relative to this point. I begin by observing, that though Dr. Jennings, who is a firm believer in the regard paid both by the Patriarchs and the Gentiles to the Paradisaical sabbath, scruples not to affirm that the nations in general, during that period and afterwards, used to divide their time into weeks, he does not support his declaration by any testimonies. A little before him, Mr. Wright wrote much the same, not indeed of the seventh day in particular, but, of what he calls the seventh part of time. Dr. Rees, in his *Encyclopædia*, under the word *Week*, has given us a number of authors, who all acknowledge the regard paid by the ancient Gentiles to the seventh day, though they differ from each other concerning the cause. Dr. Wallis, on the contrary, flatly denies that any nation divided time into weeks, except that of the Jews; and I must own, that I have not yet been able to discover any term that

than to their origin; it being difficult to get access to a copy of the Scriptures, or to find a Jew that could give information of their contents. It will appear, however, presently, that Hesiod, one of the earliest of the Greek writers, knew not only the sacred character of the seventh day, but also something of the reason of it.

is descriptive of that period of days, or that answers to the word *week*, in any Greek or Latin classic prior to the Christian era. On whichever side, however, the truth lies, Dr. Wallis is certainly mistaken in supposing, as he does, that the Gentiles never knew of or had weeks, admitting that they lost the idea and the use of them afterwards: for it is plain, as I have already shown, that the Syrians had them in the time of Laban, the Moabites in the time of Balaam, and the Philistines at the time that Samson was married among them; it being incredible in this last case, that the Philistines would have borrowed the period of seven days from the Jews, whom they hated and oppressed.

The earliest writers from whom the quotations alluded to a little before were taken, are Homer and Hesiod. Both of them are commonly thought, I believe, to have been cotemporary with King David, about 1000 years before Christ: though Dr. Wallis represents Hesiod as being in the time of King Uzziah, nearly two hundred years later. Morer, a rector in London, who (A.D. 1701) published several ‘Dialogues on the ‘Lord’s Day,’ which he dedicated to the Bishop of London, quotes more passages from the afore-said writers than any other whom I have seen. He also annexes to them, or intermingles with them, some verses relative to the point under

discussion, from Callimachus, who wrote about 300 years before Christ. Unhappily, he does not assign to each his own expressions respectively. I shall translate them in the order in which he has given them, *p.* 102.

‘Afterwards on the seventh, the sacred day descended.’

‘The seventh day was, and all things had been finished on it.’

‘The seventh was sacred.’

‘And on the seventh morning, we left the stream from Acheron.’

‘And the seventh sacred day.’

‘And again the seventh, the bright shining of the sun.’

‘The seventh was among good things, and the seventh was the birth-day.’

‘The seventh is among the first, and the seventh is perfect.’

‘The seventh indeed, on which all things were finished.’

‘And on the seventh morning all things were finished.’\*

\* Ἑβδοματὴ δ’ ἡπειτα καθελυθεν ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.

Ἑβδομον ἡμᾶρ ἐστὶν, καὶ τῷ τετελείετ’ ἅπαντα.

Ἑβδομὴ ἦν ἱερή.

Ἑβδοματὴ ᾗς λιπομεν ροὸν ἐξ Ἀχέρωντος,

καὶ ἑβδομον ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.

Of these lines Dr. Jennings quotes two, the first and the sixth; the former, he tells us, is from Homer, the latter from Hesiod. He thinks, with me, that in consequence of the positive institution of the seventh day sabbath at the end of the Creation, (the knowledge of which, in my opinion, as already explained, these earliest writers, in common with the other ancients, obtained from tradition,) they knew of weeks, and accounted 'one day of the seven' more sacred than the rest.

In order, however, to place in a true light the sense of these singular verses, and their bearing on the present question, it will be necessary for me to remark on the observations of my opponents concerning them, and to add some of my own. Dr. Wallis quotes two other lines, after Clemens, from Hesiod, (and they are the only lines he does quote,) which he renders thus:—  
p. 5.

'Begin we with the First and the Fourth, and the Seventh, a sacred day, because that on this

Ἑβδοματῇ αὐθις λαμπρὸν φάος ἡλίουιο.

Ἑβδομῇ εἰν ἀγαθοῖσι, καὶ ἑβδομῇ ἐστὶ γενεθλῇ.

Ἑβδομῇ εἰν πρωτοῖσι, καὶ ἑβδομῇ ἐστὶ τελευτῇ.

Ἑβδοματῇ δὴ, καὶ τετελεσμένα πάντα τετυκται.

Ἑβδοματῇ δ' ἧϊ τετελεῖται ἀπαντα.



day, Apollo, who has a golden sword, was born of Latona.'

Having cited the passage, he remarks (and Morer concurs with him, *p.* 149) that the seventh was not the only day which Hesiod notices as worthy of distinction, and also that he is speaking not of the days of the week, but of the days of the month, as appears from his noticing afterwards the eleventh, twelfth, and other days. But though the statement of these learned men is correct and pertinent, yet it concludes nothing against the argument of Dr. Jennings. It does not deny, that the seventh day, which Homer calls 'sacred,' is the seventh of the week; and even if the day called sacred by Hesiod was the seventh of the month, it is remarkable that he gives that epithet to none of the other days which he distinguishes. The epithet, too, is repeatedly given to that day. It is easy to conceive, how an epithet which the heathen applied at first to the seventh day of the week, might afterwards be transferred to the seventh of the month—especially if any of them had lost (as they seem to have done in a course of time) the knowledge of weeks, and the custom of reckoning by them. As to the first and fourth days which Hesiod mentions with respect, as well as the seventh, which he calls sacred on account of its being the first day of Apollo, [the sun,] and

consequently, according to the fable, of Diana, [the moon,] when it is considered that light was created on the first day, that the two great sources of it to this earth are represented to have been 'made' on the fourth day, and that the seventh day was set apart for sacred purposes by the Deity in honour of and for commemorating the Creation, of which light and its two great sources are such eminent and important parts, the statement of Hesiod can scarcely be looked upon otherwise than as an allegorical account of the facts just mentioned, and as confirming instead of overthrowing the supposition, that the heathen had heard of the institution of the seventh day sabbath by tradition, and for a certain time paid this respect to it. The observation, therefore, of Morer, that the priests of Apollo called him by a Greek name which signifies *seventh day born*, is not adverse to the aforesaid reasoning; for though the sun was 'made' on the fourth day, his birth might very well be kept or celebrated on the seventh day, according to the Scriptural narrative. With respect to the divine worship performed on the first, fourth, and seventh days, being, as the same poet tells us, at length transferred to Jupiter, it is possible that my reader will wonder as little at that change, as that the sacred regard paid at first to the seventh day of the week, should afterwards

be transferred to the seventh day of the month. Without the natural supposition that has been made, there is no way of accounting for the pretended birth-day being fixed to the seventh day of any period rather than to any other day; nor is the transfer more extraordinary, than that the celebration of Apollo's birth-day should be monthly, (if it was so, and not weekly,) rather than annual.

Plutarch, according to Bishop White, mentions in the life of Theseus, (who lived in the time of the Judges,) that the Greeks consecrated the eighth day, as also that the Romans kept the ninth day. Both these days were, I suppose, days of the month. Certainly keeping either of these is different from keeping the last day of each week. But (as was said before) the practice of keeping a stated day at all, and so frequently as every month, might arise from their ancestors' knowing and keeping the seventh day sabbath originally; and it is not easy to account for the practice, though a deviation, on any other ground.

The most important expressions, however, in the lines that have been quoted are, that 'the seventh day is a perfect day;' that 'on it all things were finished;' and that it was 'among the good things.' They resemble so strongly the words of the institution, (Gen. 2. 2, 3.) that their

reference to it cannot be doubted. Morer, as I stated before, does not tell us whether Homer, Hesiod, or Callimachus uses them, nor have I any means of ascertaining to which of these poets they belong. But supposing that they should be the expressions of Callimachus, the question will then be, how he came to use them. It is not likely that the tradition before mentioned continued so long as his time, which was seven hundred years later than the time of the two former poets. He might indeed have gotten them from some ancient work or another, not now extant. But it will perhaps be thought most probable that he got them from the Septuagint.

I am aware that there are those who fix the date of the celebrated Greek version of the Old Testament just mentioned, nearly one hundred years later than the time of Callimachus, who flourished in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about three hundred years before Christ. But if some such incident as that which is commonly believed, of the Jews having furnished that prince with a copy of the Bible and a translation of it into Greek, for his new library at Alexandria, did not take place, (though detached from the fabulous circumstances that have been added to it,) I cannot account for his singular munificence to them, (according to Josephus,) and the friendly connexion between his country

and their's for fifty or sixty years at least, after the hostile proceedings of his father toward them. The idea is not incompatible with the opinion of those who think that the present Septuagint did not originate with the copy in the library, but with the translation made many years after by the Alexandrian Jews. The copy in the library, too, might or might not be called the Septuagint; and if it did bear that name, it might be so called, not from seventy-two men being concerned in making it, which is the vulgar notion, but, according to the new sentiment, from the Sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy elders, as having been procured by them for the king's use.

This great and laborious writer (Callimachus) might, then, in my opinion, have easily seen and perused the Greek translation of the Old Testament, since he resided at Alexandria many years. But supposing him to have gotten the striking expressions under consideration from the Septuagint, it still remains difficult to account for his using them. It is not likely that he would have thus honoured and justified the weekly sanctification of the seventh day by the Jews, at the risk of surprising and offending his Grecian countrymen, if the general sentiment and practice had been wholly adverse to the expressions he adopts. Most probably, though the ancient tra-



dition itself among the Gentiles had been long since lost, the effect of it continued, especially among the many nations that witnessed the constant observance of the seventh day sabbath by the Jews in the different places where they were scattered after the Babylonish captivity. Their idolatrous neighbours might not, in the time of Callimachus, be so hostile to it, as the Roman poets and philosophers showed themselves afterwards, and might even perform some superstitious rites of their own on the day. They perhaps retained the original service performed in honour of Apollo, or Jupiter, on the seventh day of the week, long after the cause of it was forgotten. Callimachus, therefore, in thus expressing himself, might be only supplying that defect, and could easily plead in his defence, if necessary, that the cause which he assigned was agreeable to the sense of the lines that have been quoted from Homer and Hesiod, and perhaps to the testimonies of some others now unknown. Should the remarkable passages in question be really Homer's or Hesiod's, and not Callimachus's, they will, in my opinion, place the knowledge of the ancient Gentiles concerning the sacred regard due to the seventh day of the week, and also their actually paying it, beyond all controversy.

The ideas I have hazarded, receive no small support from the declarations of Philo and Jose-



phus, who lived a short time after our Lord's ascension. Philo calls the seventh day sabbath 'the general feast of the world. [See Morer, p. 103.] And Josephus says, [Ibid, p. 162,] 'The laws established among us have been followed by all nations; yea the common people have long since drawn our piety into imitation; neither is there any country, Greek or Barbarian, to which the rest of our sabbath day has not reached.'

The extent to which the knowledge of the seventh day sabbath spread itself among the Gentiles, and the regard which was paid to it in some respects by them after the Babylonish captivity, were doubtless owing in a great measure to the Jews; but not so, for the reasons already given, the knowledge and respect which they had for it originally. They derived them from tradition, which must have informed both them and the Jews of the existence of many remarkable persons, and of many important facts, long before the time of written Revelation, and independent of it, notwithstanding the impossibility of stating with accuracy which, and how many. They knew of weeks, and had them in use, when the Jews were in embryo; and the quotations before mentioned, and which indicate the sacred character of the seventh day, were some of them written at a time when it was not easy to get access to a copy of the sacred books even in the

original, or to find any one that could give information from them concerning the origin of their customs.\* Nor indeed was either of these means necessary: for why should not the Gentiles know that from tradition, which the Jews themselves did, who, as I shall have occasion to show in the next Chapter, knew of the seventh day sabbath before they heard of it from Moses? Yet the tradition, or rather the effect of it, was most probably preserved and extended, if not renewed, among them, by intercourse with the Jews, and by their example. It needed these helps, as well as that of worshipping the Deity, or of offering sacrifice; nor did it experience much greater mutilations and corruptions, than those which fell to the lot of the others.

Before I conclude these remarks on the different opinions relative to the regard paid by the Patriarchs and the Gentiles to the seventh day sabbath, I wish to make a few on the name which the seventh day of the week usually bears in modern times. The English historian, Rapin, affirms that its present name, *Saturday*, was imported into this country by the Saxons, and that they called it so in honour of their God, *Satur*, whom, as he tells us, they worshipped on that day. Nor do I see any cause to question the correct-

\* The beginning of the Jewish monarchy is here referred to.

ness of his assertion. For though it may be thought that they borrowed it from the Britons, (since the Welch at this day call Saturday by a word which signifies the day of Saturn,) yet if they had done so, they would most probably have borrowed the names of the other days from the Britons, which they certainly did not.

But whence did the Saxons in Germany obtain their Satur and their Saturday? Not from the Romans; for though the latter, as will be shown presently, resembled them both in the name they gave to the day, and in their practice on it, yet in their wars with Germany they never reached the north, where the Saxons resided. The Saxon custom, therefore, must have a different origin.

To speak first of the Romans:—Whence did the Romans derive their Saturn? Not from the Greek *Χρονος*, [*Chronos*,] to which it bears no resemblance, though the latter is constantly translated by the former, and understood to be the same deity.\* True as it may be in general that the Latin language was formed from the Greek, it is plain that this word *Saturnus*, among many others, had a different source. Most likely, it was imported from some other country near Italy,

\* The Greek word for Saturn is *Κρονος*; but he was always considered as the emblem of Time, however X came to be exchanged for K.—See Rees's Encyclopædia, Art. SATURN.

not from Greece. It is more than probable, that the origin of the Saxon god Satur, was the same with that of the Roman Saturn.

There was a particular day at Rome kept sacred to this deity; as appears from the following lines of Tibullus, who lived in the time of Augustus Cæsar;—

‘Aut ego sum causatus aves, aut omina dira,  
Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem.’\*

Lib. I. Eleg. iii. ver. 18.

That this sacred day recurred weekly, and was the same with the Saturday of the Saxons, (according to Rapin,) and with the modern Saturday, is proved by the following circumstance. Dion Cassius, an historian of the third century, according to Dr. Wallis, in his ‘Defence of the Christian Sabbath,’ p. 64, calls the seventh day, on which the Jews, from a mistaken principle of religion, refused to defend themselves against the Romans, by the name of Saturday. This, then, must have been the day referred to by Tibullus; for it is incredible that the Romans should call two days by the same name, or that since the time of Tibullus they should have

\* ‘I assigned as the cause, either that the birds, or unfavourable omens, or that the sacred day of Saturn, detained me.’

transferred the name to another day without a reason; the time also being so short.

Thus does it appear that there was a God of the name of Saturn worshipped by the Romans on the weekly sabbath kept by the Jews, which they called from him *Saturday*, before the Christian era, and by the Saxons also, under the name of *Satur*. The question is, then, Who was this Saturn? The sense of the word can only be obtained from the Greek word *Kronos* or *Chronos*, which the Romans consider as answering to it. The Greek word signifies *Time*, and the Romans represent him as the son of *Cœlus* and *Terra*; that is, of the Heaven and of the Earth. Time, therefore, the division of which into night and day took place first after God created the heaven and the earth, was worshipped by the Greeks, Romans, and Saxons, independently of each other, and that from a period immemorial: for though the Romans did not exist till between seven and eight hundred years before Christ, and the Greeks were only about four or five hundred years earlier, yet there is reason to think that the custom originated, not with them, but with those from whom they respectively descended. There is no reason to doubt the antiquity of the custom among the Saxons or their ancestors, if it existed at all among them in Germany; and the evidence seems to me (as noticed before) to pre-



ponderate in favour of that opinion—particularly since the expressions *sennight* and *fortnight*, which we still retain, and which were derived from them, contain manifest vestiges of a tradition among them, that might originally preceded day.

On what day the Greeks worshipped their Chronos is not known. But if the day differed from that on which the Romans and the Saxons worshipped the same God, it is not wonderful that civilization should in some cases (as the lines quoted from Hesiod intimate that it did sooner or later) corrupt that which the simplicity of barbarism had long retained. The Romans and Saxons, then, if not the Greeks, worshipped Time on the seventh day, weekly—the day which (as I shall show afterwards) the Jews kept—the day which God consecrated for celebrating and commemorating the beginning of time—the day which divided time into those useful periods of it, which we call weeks.

I am not ignorant that Saturn has been thought, by some to signify *Noah*. He bears, indeed, some resemblance to Time, being the father of the new world, as the other commenced with the old one; and whether in the old or new world, all things happen during the progress of time. In the time of Noah, too, almost every living thing, rational or irrational, perished, as Time is said to



be the devourer of all things. Still the Greek word *Chronos*, which the Romans translate *Saturnus*, does not mean *Noah*, but *Time*; and though the Greeks (and the Romans too, probably in imitation of them) suppose him to have had three sons, as Noah had, I never understood that the Saxons imagined this of their *Satur*, whom I have spoken of as the same Deity with Saturn, being so like him in name, and worshipped on the same day. Upon the whole, I consider the three words in question as originally and principally indicative of *Time*, notwithstanding the name and family of Noah have been by some attached to him, because of the resemblance between them in certain particulars.

Let no one wonder that Hesiod (as before stated) should represent Apollo, [the *Sun*,] and not Chronos, [*Time*,] as being worshipped on the seventh day. Apollo might possibly have supplanted Chronos or Saturn, as he himself, according to the same writer, afterwards gave way to Jupiter. Whether the Romans who worshipped Saturn on the seventh day in the time of Augustus, according to Tibullus, had constantly devoted that day to him from the time they were first a people, cannot be known. As Dion Cassius, in the passage before referred to, writing in Greek, most likely calls the day *Chronos's* day, (and not literally *Saturn's* day, or *Saturday*—so

Dr. Wallis renders the phrase,) the Greeks had possibly caused Jupiter to restore that throne to Saturn, which their fable states to have been taken from him by Jupiter.

With regard to the origin of the word *Chronos*, or *Time*, it would, I believe, prove useless to inquire. With respect to *Saturn* or *Satur*, by which the Romans always translated it, it appears to me to have been derived from one of the great northern languages, as these perhaps were from the Hebrew, which was likewise the parent of the Greek. There have been various conjectures concerning the root from which Saturn or Satur sprang. One of them, I believe, makes the Hebrew term *Satan* the primitive. The dethronement of Saturn, according to the heathen mythology, by Jupiter, whom it represents as the Supreme Deity, favours the supposition that Time, the most ancient of its gods next to the Heaven and the Earth, had been confounded with the leader of those 'angels, who kept not their first estate.' The name, indeed, of the arch-apostate does not occur in the Scriptures till the time of the patriarch Job, many ages after the Son of the 'Heaven and the Earth' who was deified must have existed. But it might have been known by tradition from the time he deceived our first parents, as Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, were, though not mentioned in

Revelation till the apostle Paul's time ; and thus have rendered it possible to confound him with the God 'Time. The alteration from Satan to Sat-ur or Saturn, might be occasioned by mistaking one Hebrew letter for another, and is not much greater than the alterations of many Hebrew words written in Greek, or of Greek words written in Latin.

Such are the circumstances which indicate the knowledge and observance of the seventh day sabbath to have existed among the ancients, whether Patriarchs or Gentiles. They are certainly not sufficient to prove the reality of the institution ; but they are neither brought forward nor wanted for any such purpose—that being abundantly manifest (as I have shown) from Gen. 2. 2, 3. if there be any meaning in words. They are brought merely to show that the silence of sacred and profane history on the subject of the ancients' knowing and regarding it is by no means so profound and total as is commonly imagined. Indeed, not a few among the most sincere and zealous supporters of the first day's claim to sanctification, not deficient in learning any more than in piety, consider, as has been noticed before, the evidence of the Patriarchal sabbath, or at least of the seventh part of time, having been always and generally, if not universally, kept, as decisive. But even those who think differently must ad-

mit the probability of the Patriarchs' keeping it, from their knowledge of weeks—as also of the ancient Gentiles' knowing it by means of tradition, and of their respecting it for a while, and of the effect continuing extensively after the tradition itself was lost. Such a probability is abundantly sufficient where no proof at all was wanted, which is the case relative to the actual observance of the seventh day sabbath: for the existence of the law for it having been proved, its non-existence would not follow, were it even demonstrable that no one had ever kept it—much less when there is no evidence at all of its non-observance, and where the appearances to the contrary are not few or inconsiderable. Strange and unaccountable as the defect of evidence concerning a particular fact may be, (though in the case of the seventh day sabbath having been kept anciently, the defect, as I have shown, may in a great measure be accounted for,) it will not justify the rejection of another fact, the reality of which does not rest upon the former, and which can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt. At the same time I must observe, that the evidence of the former fact, defective as it may seem, is not more imperfect, than the evidence adduced in favour of the miraculous parts of the Old Testament from ancient fable and history, which I myself, in common with every lover of the Holy

Scriptures, peruse with pleasure. Yet are the imperfections of the external evidence no less strange, or difficult to be accounted for, than the defect of the other : but happily, the Old Testament does no more want the support of the one, than the institution of the seventh day sabbath at the end of the Creation, wants the other.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the Seventh Day observed by the Jews as the Weekly Sabbath.*

No one, so far as I know, doubts that the day kept by the Jews in the Wilderness of Sin, (Exodus 16.) was the same with that, the weekly return of which was afterwards ordered to be kept by the Fourth Commandment. But it has been asked, What seventh day was this? Was it the same in rotation with the seventh day which was appointed in Paradise for the weekly sabbath, or was it a different day?—No one, I believe, ever questioned its being the same, prior to our Lord's ascension. There is no notice given in Exodus 16. of its being a different seventh day; and the reason assigned in the Fourth



Commandment for the divine institution of it being precisely the same as that which is stated in Genesis 2. 2, 3. naturally leads to the conclusion that both signify the same seventh day in succession. Moses, who wrote both, would, as a faithful historian, have provided against the danger of confounding them, had they not been the same, since in reading the latter, it is impossible not to advert to the former. Josephus, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, speaking of the institution in Genesis, states *that* as the cause of their observing that day of the week which they then kept and still keep as the sabbath. It is not to be thought that he would have done this, had he entertained any idea of a change in the days of the week before the Israelites entered into the Wilderness of Sin, or in the epoch whence the seventh days were computed. In a word, all who think that the passage in Genesis is only an anticipated account of what really did not take place till the Jews left Elim, of course consider the books of Genesis and Exodus as referring to the same seventh day in rotation.

The opinion just stated is, I believe, the prevailing one among the generality of Christians. But as some able writers have maintained a different sentiment, it will be proper to examine the grounds of it. It seems chiefly to rest upon the idea, that the seventh day preceding that on



which no manna fell, [see Exodus 16.] and which the Jews were both ordered to keep, and did keep, as a sabbath, was spent in travelling: and it is supposed that God would not have allowed, much less have directed, this, had it been a sabbath. I know not, however, why he should not direct them to travel from Elim to Sin on the sabbath, as well as direct them afterwards to travel round the walls of Jericho on the sabbath.

In the former Chapter of this Work, I mentioned that the children of Israel, when enslaved in Egypt, had it in their power to keep the sabbath mentally and in private conversation, if not in a public manner—provided they were so disposed. It does not, however, follow that, whatever some might do, the bulk of them were so disposed: the contrary is by far the most probable supposition. In that case, the general practice of the duty would be revived and restored at one time or at another; and this seems to have been done, on the occasion of the manna's descending. It is no more wonderful that the Divine Being should defer the renewal of the practice to this time, instead of calling for its revival the moment they set out on their march, than that he should defer the manifestation of his displeasure against Moses for not circumcising his sons, till he was on his return from Midian to Egypt, or his order for circumcising the new race

of male Israelites, till they had crossed the river Jordan.

The injunction for keeping the sabbath upon the occasion of the manna's falling is introduced too abruptly for a new institution, to which the Jews were strangers. It is spoken of to them as a thing known. The people expressed no surprise, when they were reminded that 'to-morrow' was 'the feast of the Lord.' When it is said, 'The Lord has given you the sabbath,' there is no reason assigned for it, as it is natural to expect that there would have been, had it been given them for the first time, and as was actually the case when the sabbath was instituted in Paradise. Whatever, in fine, the statute and ordinance which God is said toward the close of Exodus 15. to have made for the Israelites at Marah might be, it is not represented to have been the sabbath.

Dr. Jennings, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. 2. p. 150, conjectures, that at the first passover, the beginning of the week was changed, as well as the beginning of the year, and that its days were anticipated, the sixth becoming the seventh, and the original seventh day becoming now the first day of the week following. According to him, therefore, the Jews observe the sixth day of the week in order from the Creation; and the Christians, in keeping the first day, keep also the

return of the very day which God rested upon, and appointed to be the weekly sabbath—the day which he thinks, as well as I, was observed both by the Patriarchs and the Gentiles. But he produces no passage of Scripture in support of this conjecture, nor do I know of any writer that agrees with him in it. It has indeed too much the appearance of being founded on a wish to support the obligation to sanctify the first day, by the original obligation to sanctify the day before; a wish as unnecessary as vain, if the first day be really a sabbath appointed by the authority of the Apostles.

Nor is there better reason for doubting, with Dr. Wallis, whether the day which the Jews were ordered to keep was the same seventh day in rotation with that which was consecrated at the end of the Creation, on account of accidents that might change it, any more than on account of the supposed probability of its having been changed with design by the Deity. The learned Doctor does not venture to deny the possibility of the true reckoning having been preserved to the giving of the law: he only thinks it incredible. He however assigns no reasons for this supposed incredibility. Perhaps they are, the long period of 2500 years that intervened between the Creation and that time—the want of means for keeping records among the ancients—and the

changes to which mankind, individually and socially, were peculiarly subject in the early ages. It should, however, be recollected, that long as the period in question is, it is but a few hundred years more than the period which has elapsed since the destruction of Jerusalem, during which neither Jews nor Christians have wanted for emigrations, persecutions, and revolutions; yet, though Dr. W. expresses himself doubtful whether the present Sunday, and consequently the present seventh day, kept by Christians in general, or by the Jews, be the same in regular succession with the days that were named the *first* or the *seventh* at the time our Lord rose from the dead, I never heard that any one concurred with him in his doubts. As to the want of records among the ancients, allowing that there were none of any kind, (which cannot be proved,) the want was compensated for two thousand years by tradition, in a way that it has never been since; the tradition having to pass through so few generations, and the opportunities of recurring to the person with whom it originated being so frequent: the tradition in particular respecting the sabbath, the origin of the institution, and the division of time into weeks to which it gave rise, had to pass through four or five individuals only between Adam and Moses. Besides, however

deficient the ancients in general might be respecting the possession, transmission, or preservation of records, the First Book of Chronicles and other parts of Scripture show that there was no want of them among either the antediluvian or the post-diluvian Patriarchs; nor can any genealogies equal to their's in length of period, in detail of important circumstances, or in completeness, be produced among the Gentiles, at least since the Christian era. I see no reason, therefore, for thinking it improbable that the Patriarchs and their cotemporaries, between Adam and Moses, should know of the week and the sabbath, or that they should retain them correctly, especially the week—at least in that line of ancestry from which Moses descended. The preservation of the right week was sufficient for securing or recovering the sabbath: and though Dr. Wallis positively asserts that none except the Jews knew of the division of time into weeks, it has been proved from Genesis 29. 27. that the Gentiles knew of it once, however they might forget it afterwards, as they did the sabbath in some important respects, the origin and design of sacrifices, and the worship of the true God. No diary of private or public transactions that I know of exists, or is judged necessary, to prove the constant succession of weeks in the proper order, either among the Jews



or the Christians, from our Lord's time to the present moment :—why should any be called for to prove it from the first man to the days of the Jewish lawgiver? I cannot but think that Dr. Wallis is unreasonable in doubting, without assigning any reason for his doubts, in a case, the possibility of which he does not deny—that his doubts tend to universal scepticism, so far as ancient history is concerned—and that this part of his argument is no less hostile to the divine institution of the day for which he professes himself to be an advocate, than to the claim of that day to sanctification which he opposes. In my opinion, there is no fact in history more certain, than that of there having been no change whatever in the days or the weeks since the Creation. The idolatrous Gentiles readily acquiesced in the ideas of the Jews and Christians on the subject during the second century, if they were ever ignorant or differently minded respecting them. There has never been any dispute between the Jews and the Christians, or among the Christians themselves, either in the same country, or in different countries, about the beginning or the ending of the week, and which was the first or the last day of it. The Blessed God on Mount Sinai states the same reason for sanctifying the seventh day, which was stated for it in Paradise; and had any accident happened between the two eras to



change the day, he both could and would have corrected the error, to prevent a day's being kept, to which the reason assigned for its observance was not applicable.

Upon these grounds, therefore, I see no cause for dissenting from the general opinion in modern times, and which I believe to have been universal before our Lord's ascension, that the seventh day kept by the Israelites in the Wilderness of Sin, and enjoined a short time after in the Fourth Commandment, was the very same in rotation with the seventh day which the Divine Being consecrated in Paradise, and consequently that it was no new institution; but, like the other nine commandments, only a solemn repetition of what was, and always had been, a law from the very beginning. I am happy in agreeing in this particular with the bulk of Christians in this country, so far as I am able to judge from documents very generally approved of among them. The Protestant Dissenters avow the sentiment I have been maintaining, by the answer returned in the *Assembly's Catechism* to the question relative to the day appointed by the Divine Being to be the weekly sabbath before our Lord's time, from the Creation; and the Church of England state the same in their *Homily* on Prayer.

Before I close the evidence of the Jews' having observed the weekly return of that seventh day on which the Divine Being rested, I must briefly notice the objection made to it by some, on account of the miracle recorded in the book of Joshua of the sun's standing still a whole day, which they suppose to have transferred the former seventh day to a different day. This by no means necessarily follows. Suppose the miracle to have happened at three o'clock in the afternoon on a Tuesday: when it ceased on Wednesday afternoon at the same time, there was no necessity for calling the day Tuesday instead of Wednesday, since, according to the sacred narrative, it was known how long the miracle lasted. Nor was it called otherwise than by its proper name, [Wednesday,] as appears from the reason assigned in the Fourth Commandment for the enactment of the seventh day sabbath continuing unaltered: for the reason would have ceased to be applicable, had the former seventh day now been called the sixth, and consequently the sabbath not been kept till the day after.

Having thus shown that the seventh day noticed in Exodus 16. and in the Fourth Commandment, was the same in regular succession from the seventh day which the Divine Being sanctified in Gen. 2. as being the day on which

he rested at the close of the Creation, I wish to make a remark or two on the phraseology and meaning of the Fourth Commandment itself. Mr. Wright asserts, in substance, that the terms of the Commandment are expressed so indefinitely as to suit any nation or age of the world, let it keep which day of the seven it may. This would be the case, were there nothing in it except the general expressions *seventh day* and *sabbath*. But the words used in connexion with them effectually confine them to a definite and precise meaning. The 'seventh day,' which is the 'sabbath day' that is to be 'remembered to be kept holy,' signifies only that seventh day which the Jews knew of, and which they were in the habit of keeping already. Their uniform conduct ever since shows that they understood it to mean the last day of the week, and that only; nor did they think that they were at liberty to exchange it for any other of the seven, under the pretence of having equally laboured the six preceding days. Mr. W. himself, I should imagine, would be obliged to admit, that if they had dared to act differently, they would soon have paid dearly for their presumption. But if their sense of the precept was correct, no age or country has a right to understand it in a different sense; for a law cannot—at least ought not—to have two senses. Even the repeal of a law cannot alter

its meaning. The partial repeal of a law will indeed alter the original sense of it; but the change would necessarily require an alteration of the expressions in the law, and in that case the law would become a new one. While its terms continue the same as ever, the meaning must continue the same as ever.

The expression, therefore, 'sabbath day,' in the last clause of the commandment, which the Lord is said to have 'blessed and hallowed,' could not be understood by the Jews, at the time they heard it delivered, to be any other day than the seventh or last day of the week; and of course not by any one else justly, in a subsequent period of time. But if the former clauses of the commandment had not prevented its ambiguity, the words in connexion must have infallibly done so, since they confine it to the last day of the week; for it was the seventh or last day of the first week on which God rested, and which he blessed and sanctified, and no other.

If this commandment did not bind the Jews to the observance of the last day of the week exclusively, there is no other that did. It likewise consecrates the seventh part of time merely in consecrating that day: so that if the sacred character of the latter had ever ceased, that of the former must have ceased with it. If the seventh day sabbath had been repealed before our Sa-

viour's time, the Jews would not have been obliged to keep any other on the ground of the Fourth Commandment, whatever they might have been obliged to do on the ground of reason, or of a new institution.

Finally, there is no other difference between the Fourth Commandment and the institution in Genesis 2., than the account contained in the former of the mode in which the sabbath was to be sanctified. The advanced state of society, compared with what it was at the beginning, required this. It checks the inordinate love of gain, and inculcates the exercise of humanity towards all dependants, whether rational or irrational.

It may now be asked of what use it is for us to know that the day enjoined on the Jews, at Mount Sinai, was the same in succession with that which was hallowed at the Creation. I answer, that it appears hence not to have been necessary for the apostles to tell the Gentiles to keep the day, in order to render the keeping of it a duty incumbent on them. It was their duty to keep it, as well as to keep the other nine commandments, whether they were commanded to do so by the inspired missionaries of Christ, or not. If they had forgotten the day, or were in the habit of neglecting it, (as too often happens with respect to the other commandments,) or if



they had showed any reluctance to return to the observance of it, it might have been necessary for the apostles to remind them of their duty. But there seems to have been no occasion for this, so far as can be judged from the testimonies of Josephus and Philo, already quoted, concerning the sacred regard felt by the nations for the seventh day at that time—the very great probability that they were in the habit of worshipping some false God or another (Saturn perhaps) on that day, in consequence of the ancient tradition once among them, though now lost—and the readiness with which the ‘religious proselytes’ coalesced with the Jews in that practice. So far as can be learned from the New Testament, in order to the converts from among the Gentiles keeping the seventh day, it was only necessary for the apostles not to forbid it. Whether they did forbid it, I shall not at present inquire.\*

It cannot be denied, however, that there are certain expressions in different parts of the Old

\* The sarcasm of the Latin poet, Horace, on the *sabbata* of the Jews, relates not to their weekly sabbaths, but to their new moons (*tricesima*). The Romans might call them *Sabbatarii*, or *Sabbath-men*, in derision, not because they kept a *part*, but because they kept the *whole* of the seventh day. This seems likely from Seneca’s charge against them, of ‘wasting one day weekly in idleness.’



Testament, which appear at first view to prove that the Divine Being intended to confine the sanctification of the seventh day to the Jews. These I shall state fairly, and give them all the force in the argument to which they are entitled.

In Deuteronomy, it is said that the Jews were commanded to keep the sabbath day, because they had been ‘strangers and bondmen in Egypt.’ Were there no other reason assigned elsewhere in Scripture for the injunction, this statement might be thought decisive in favour of the precept’s belonging to the Jews only. But the Fourth Commandment itself gives a different one, and one that relates to all the rest of mankind as well as to the Jews. Nor is the one reason incompatible with the other. For a commandment may be binding on an individual on the same account for which it is binding on others, at the same time that it is binding upon him for a reason peculiar to himself; and that without releasing others from their obligation to obey it. The particular obligation which the patriarch Joseph was under to dutifulness toward his father Jacob, did not confine the obligation to him, exclusive of his brethren and all others who have parents. Beside, the consideration mentioned in Deuteronomy enforced only that part of the commandment which related to rest from

labour, on the part of their servants, the stranger within their gates, and their cattle, as well as on their own part: it did not extend to sanctifying the day, that is, to setting it apart for God, or for religious purposes. For the reason of this injunction, recourse must be had to that which is given in the Fourth Commandment, and which belongs not only to the Jews, but to all other nations.

Again: the day ordered to be kept holy in the Fourth Commandment has been considered as merely Jewish, on account of its being placed at the head of feasts which are agreed on all hands to be peculiar to the Jews, and which are enumerated Lev. 23. The reason of this, I conceive, was, the resemblance it bore to them in its general nature, being, like them, a positive institution and a religious feast. But in its cause and object it did not resemble them at all. It did not proceed from any thing that regarded the Jews only, as they did; since it arose from the Divine Being's resting after the Creation. Nor was it directed, like them, to an object which would cause it to terminate with the Jewish dispensation, namely, to the death of Christ; since it was instituted before the fall of man. The obligation to sanctify the seventh day no more becomes a part of the ceremonial law, on account of its association with Jewish feasts, than

fornication became a part of it, because of its being mentioned (Acts 15.) in conjunction with participating in things offered to idols, things strangled, and blood; or than the Fourth Commandment, which is positive, becomes strictly speaking moral, and therefore unrepealable, in consequence of being inserted in a code of law that is properly speaking moral.

A third argument brought to prove that the day kept by the Jews was intended for them solely, is the supposed rigour of its restrictions, and the peculiarity of the penalties annexed to the breach of it. But with regard to the former, it should be remembered, that though the Jews were forbidden on that day to light a fire or to dress food in the Wilderness, they might not be so restrained in Canaan, nor even in the Wilderness, under any extraordinary circumstances, such as cold, sickness, &c. Necessity or mercy might not require those works of them, which they do of us; and works of these kinds only are now lawful on the sabbath. Our Lord did not treat the restrictions of the seventh day sabbath as rigorous; he merely condemned the superstitious additions which the Jews had made to them.

As to the extraordinary penalties annexed to the breach of the commandment, they were no other than the punishments which were inflicted

on the transgressors of almost, if not quite, all the other nine. Yet who is there that thinks that the other nine precepts of the Decalogue were obligatory solely on the Jews?

The grand argument, however, for supposing that the Fourth Commandment—at least that part of it which enjoins the sanctification of the seventh day, and which is imagined to be separable from the rest, was designed exclusively for the Jews, is taken from the latter end of Exodus 31. and from different passages in the Prophecy of Ezekiel, where the seventh day sabbath is pointedly and repeatedly spoken of as intended to be a sign to distinguish them from the Gentiles, and to be a memorial throughout their generations. These passages, understood literally, and detached from the rest of the Old Testament, certainly do naturally and powerfully suggest the idea just stated. But I must observe, that if they do really confine any part of the Fourth Commandment to the Jews, they confine the *whole* of it to them, and not *a part only*; for the divine declaration is equally made, and in a manner equally peremptory, concerning *every* part, as it is concerning *any* part. There is not the smallest ground, in the texts alluded to, for detaching the seventh day sabbath from the rest of the commandment, and supposing that only to relate to the Jews. The day kept by the Jews

at the time that the Fourth Commandment was given, and the reason assigned for the commandment's being given, confine the words 'seventh day' to the last day of the week; so that if that day be not now referred to in the Fourth Commandment, no other day can be referred to. Supposing the seventh part of time abstractedly to have a right to sanctification, its right must stand on the ground of reason, not on the ground of the expression 'seventh day' in that commandment. The unavoidable inference is, that Christians have no more concern with any part of the Fourth Commandment, than they have with the Passover; and therefore cannot with propriety introduce it into their speeches or writings as a precept binding upon them, or pray to God to incline their hearts to keep it.

If, on the other hand, it be thought reasonable to introduce any consideration foreign to the natural import of the passages, for the sake of showing that a part of the Fourth Commandment, though not the whole, relates to us and is binding on us, (an object which, as has been shown, is unattainable, on account of the exclusive meaning and the indivisibility of the commandment,) it is equally reasonable to adduce considerations for the purpose of showing that no part of the commandment was given to the Jews for a sign between them and other na-



tions, in such a sense as to exclude the Gentiles from participation in it, and from obligation to keep it.

Such considerations I propose to bring forward. But before I do it, I wish to remark a little more at large on the justice and tendency of the distinction usually made in modern times, between one part of the Fourth Commandment and another. I say *in modern times*, because I believe that the distinction was never made before our Lord's ascension, any more than that it was ever supposed, before that time, that the seventh day which the Jews observed in the Wilderness of Sin, was different from that which was the seventh day of the week, reckoning in order from the Creation. The distinction is this—that the Fourth Commandment is partly positive or ceremonial, and partly moral; the former part only of which, it is said, was given to the Jews for a sign, and intended solely for them. The part referred to, is that which enjoins the sanctification of the seventh or last day of the week. All the rest of the commandment is imagined to form no part of the sign in question, as being moral, and on that account as belonging to and being obligatory upon all mankind. I have proved, however, in a former Chapter, that the part (if such a part existed) in which the morality, the equity, or the spirit of the pre-



cept is commonly made to consist, is no more moral than the part which is commonly spoken of as positive or ceremonial, if by the term *moral* something is meant that is a dictate of reason, and discoverable by the light of nature. In this sense, nothing is moral, except that some part of every day should be occupied in the worship of God. Mere reason does not require that the time devoted to him should be the same time, or the same portion of time, one day as on another; much less does it require that he should be worshipped for a whole day together, and that once rather than twice a week, weekly rather than monthly, or on the same day of the week rather than on different days. With respect to domestic, social, and public worship, the only particular enjoined by reason (beside frequency in the last case) is, that it should be at such times, and for such a length of time together, as the persons independent of each other, who propose to engage in it, can agree upon. Even a ruler, in fixing the time arbitrarily for this purpose, when left to himself, would never think of devoting a whole day to religion in one way or in another at once; and the part that he does order to be so devoted, returns annually at most, and not weekly, or even monthly.

Reason, then, only calls for the setting apart some time by individuals each day for divine

worship, and some time on some days by bodies of men for social or public worship, leaving to them the choice of the hours and the days, provided the worship be frequent. Whatever else it enjoins in this matter is contingent, being founded upon something that may or may not be; for instance, that twenty-four hours together should be sanctified, and that the same should recur at stated periods, in case the Divine Being should be pleased to appoint both these by a positive institution. Such contingencies, (while they continue to be contingencies,) and the absolute cases mentioned before them, are the only ways in which the Fourth Commandment can be conceived of, in order to its being accounted, properly speaking, moral. For though the expression 'to keep holy' certainly signifies something moral, and nothing else, yet the morality of the commandment never can be made reasonably or usefully to consist in that solitary phrase, since sanctification cannot possibly be reduced to practice, detached from specifying some person or some thing that is to be sanctified.

Removing, therefore, that part of the precept which is supposed to be ceremonial, and to relate to the Jews only, the sole part which remains, and is binding upon us, as strictly moral, is as follows:—

101 71.5 102

‘Remember to keep holy such time or times as the Deity may have appointed, or shall appoint, for that purpose. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, nor suffer work to be done by any under thy control, whether rational or irrational.’

The precept now resembles that given to the Israelites to erect no altar for public worship, except in the place where the Lord their God should choose. It may with propriety be recited and acquiesced in, in all ages and places. It will possess a claim upon practice, whenever the Deity shall have appointed a time, but not else; nor can it be known by the light of nature whether he will ever appoint a time, if he has not appointed one already. Of course it can contain no reason for any appointment, because none is supposed to have taken place, and because every new appointment requires a new reason. I must add, that whenever a time is named, the precept will be no longer moral, but positive.

Whether such a skeleton as the precept is now reduced to, so unnecessary, so abstract, and in that respect so unlike any of the other nine, ought to satisfy the mind of a real Christian, let the reader judge. For my own part, I should think that such a Christian would be shocked at thus altering and mutilating a divine commandment, even in imagination. Can this adherence

to the morality of the Fourth Commandment be called retaining its spirit? Would a human legislator allow any law of his to be thus treated? But if the credibility of its having been reduced by Christianity to the state just described be yet insisted upon, still its actual reduction to this state remains to be proved from the New Testament, as also the authority for substituting the new form for the old, without which there can be no Fourth Commandment for Christians. Even then the new Fourth Commandment would be useless in practice, except the New Testament has named a weekly day for sanctification; and in that case, the commandment is not wanted.

The commandment, then, will stand thus:—

‘Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh part of time, or one day in seven, is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, &c. For the consecration of this part of time is requisite for civil, moral, and religious purposes. Therefore the Lord thy God blessed the seventh part of time, &c.’

If this be now the Fourth Commandment upon the authority of the New Testament, it commands something, it is true; but it is positive, not moral; it is also a new commandment, and ought to be substituted for the former.

I am sensible, indeed, that the advocates for dividing the Fourth Commandment into positive or ceremonial, and moral, include more in the moral part than I have done. They include in it the obligation to keep a whole day together—a stated day—and that every week.

But I must repeat my denial of these ideas being moral as dictates of reason, any more than the sanctification of the seventh or last day of the week is, strictly speaking, moral. Reason dictates nothing more on the subject than what I have stated in a preceding Chapter. If the observance of either the seventh day or the seventh part of time be termed moral, (to which, as I have stated, I have no objection,) it must be on grounds different from that which is usually and properly stated as the ground of a law being moral—namely, that it is a dictate of reason, and discoverable by it. These grounds, as enumerated in that Chapter, are,—that it was discovered in the manner in which certain moral duties were themselves actually discovered—that is, by revelation;—that it was discovered as early as any moral duty whatever;—that it has a reason assigned for it, as every moral duty has a reason naturally and necessarily;—that the reason assigned for it relates to all mankind, as well as the reasons on which moral duties are founded;—and, lastly, that it is inserted by the Divine



Legislator himself in the midst of a code delivered solemnly as a moral code. But these reasons give the seventh day as good a title to sanctification on the ground of morality, as they do to the seventh part of time, and even a much better one, because they relate directly and immediately to the seventh day; whereas they relate to the seventh part of time, only in consequence of the former fact.

It may perhaps be said, that though the observance of one day in seven abstractedly be not a moral duty on the ground of revelation, it is so on the ground of reason; since reason dictates that such a day should be kept, as conducive to, if not necessary for, the benefit of both man and beast. But it is not true that reason inculcates any such practice, separate from revelation.\* The idea never occurred to man till long after the Christian era, and most probably never would have occurred to him had it not been for revelation. There can be no doubt of its propriety, since the divine appointment of the seventh day sabbath:† and the beneficial effect of a

\* See Chapter ii.

† The seventh day of the week, which God appointed, is as fit for the purposes alluded to, as any other can be—and infinitely better for that reason, except he has been pleased to substitute another for it.



weekly sabbath has been felt both by the rational and irrational part of the creation; but without such an appointment, the weariness often felt by too many, with the misapplication of leisure, and the fatal abuse of it in multitudes of cases, would induce mere reason to suspect the wisdom of consecrating twenty-four hours together: neither would it be clear that one day in seven should be consecrated in preference to one in six, or in eight days; the week being made to consist precisely of seven days, and neither more nor fewer. Mankind are indebted for all these ideas to the positive institution of the seventh day sabbath by divine authority; which, together with the six preceding days that were employed in the Creation, composed the first week: and whatsoever is thus founded on the revealed will of God, rational and agreeable to expediency as it certainly must be, never can be a dictate of mere reason.

The seventh part of time, therefore, is no more moral on the ground of reason, than the seventh day itself; and though, as was said before, it may be called so, in a qualified sense, on the ground of revelation, yet it depends on the seventh day for its title. The sanctification, then, of the seventh day is not more positive than the rest of the commandment. The commandment is like our Lord's coat. 'Let us not rend it.' 'What God

hath joined together, let not man put asunder.\* It is positive in every part, though not ceremonial—if the term be understood judaically, as something that referred to Christ, and ceased at his death. The whole of the Fourth Commandment must consequently be abandoned to the Jews as a sign, if any part of it be in reality exclusively their's; and the whole must be read or heard by us, as we read or hear of circumcision. We must in this case look elsewhere in the word of God, and in no respect at this precept of the Decalogue, for the obligation on our part to consecrate any day, and which day we are to consecrate.

But it is now time for me to observe, that however the sanctification of the seventh day did distinguish, or might be intended to distinguish, the Jews from the Gentiles, it does not appear to me to have been meant for them only. A secondary and subordinate reason or end may exist without detriment to the grand and primary cause or end. I have already assigned my reasons for thinking that the seventh day sabbath was instituted at the close of the Creation, that

\* The substance of the commandment is plainly this, that God would have us keep holy a particular day every week for a certain reason, which reason applies to that day, and to no other.

it was given to all mankind, and that they actually paid a sacred regard to it for a longer or shorter time, in one way or in another. I have also given my reasons for thinking that the seventh day kept by the Israelites in the Wilderness of Sin, (Exod. 16.) and that mentioned in the Fourth Commandment, were the same in rotation with that which was instituted in Gen. 2. 2, 3. I must, therefore, of course think, that the seventh day in the Fourth Commandment was not peculiar, or intended to be peculiar, to the Jews. With respect to the phraseology used toward the close of Exodus 31. and that of some texts in Ezekiel's prophecy, I think that it relates entirely to the extraordinary mode of the original institution being 'made known' (Nehemiah 9.) to the Jews, and to the effect it had in consequence of the forgetfulness, ignorance, and error of the Gentiles concerning it. The latter knew the seventh day sabbath only by traditionary revelation: the former had, in addition, the benefit of a personal revelation. The Gentiles had, perhaps, few instances among them of spiritual blessings bestowed on that day: not so the Jews, among whom the pious were chiefly to be found under the former dispensation: the Gentiles forgot or misapplied it after a while. The Jews continued to observe it. In a word, those of the Gentiles who continued to pay any sacred regard

to it at all kept only a part of it, whereas the Jews spent the whole, externally at least, in religious exercises, abstaining entirely from secular business, and refusing to take even the most necessary measures for the defence of their liberty, if not of their lives, on that day, though the law of God did not require any such self-denial.

What a singular appearance must this abstinence and practice every week, through a whole nation, have presented to every foreigner who visited the Jews while they resided in their own country, accustomed as he was to observe and to see observed the sabbath, of which a part only was occupied by the Heathen in sacred rites, as was the case with many other days which were kept by them! How peculiar must this weekly habit have been thought by surrounding nations, whenever it occurred to their minds, or became the topic of discourse among them! Above all, it must have given the Jews a strange appearance, after they were dispersed through the Gentile world, when the natives of each different country saw a large body of people in the midst of them doing nothing for a whole day together, except one religious act or another, and that weekly! The censure of the Roman philosopher Seneca, before alluded to, concerning the supposed idleness of the Jews, ought scarcely to excite wonder. The rite of

circumcision, on account of which they were sometimes reproached, did not distinguish them from other nations, like the custom in question: for circumcision was practised by other nations, as well as by them. It was also a rite performed with comparative secrecy; it occupied only a few moments, and occurred only once in a person's life. But the sanctification of the sabbath occupied a whole day every week, and that in the most public manner. No one could tell a Jew from another by any external appearance that circumcision gave him among men; but all around him could not possibly avoid knowing what he was by his attention to the peculiarities of the weekly sabbath. The Gentiles must converse with him to know his principles, or go into the temple or the synagogue where he worshipped, to learn the nature of the public service he performed there: but to become acquainted with the distinction made by the sabbath between them and him, they had only to open their eyes, and view his proceedings, and his abstinences for a whole day together, every time that particular day returned, which was with every new week.

The Jews, therefore, were indeed distinguished from all other nations; by the extraordinary manner in which the knowledge (Neh. 9. 14.) of the seventh day sabbath, as well as of the rest of the Decalogue, was communicated to them, and by

the spiritual blessings bestowed on it, which were chiefly experienced among them—by their universal and continued observance of it—and particularly by their devoting the whole day to religion. But these singularities do not prove that the other nations had no concern with the seventh day sabbath, any more than their not knowing the true God, or their not possessing the Old Testament by means of written revelation, or God's not having made known his judgments and statutes (even those contained in the moral law) supernaturally to them, (by all which the Jews were also separated from them, as well as by the sabbath,) prove that they had no concern with, nor were called upon to regard any one of them.

Such are the reasons that induce me to think the arguments brought to establish the exclusive obligation of the Jews to keep the seventh day holy insufficient, and unable to invalidate the contrary inference of its extending to the Gentiles, drawn from the evidence of the day observed by the Jews being the same in rotation with that on which God rested, and which he in consequence appointed to be the weekly sabbath.

From this coincidence it follows, that the seventh day sabbath is still obligatory upon mankind, except it be repealed.



A positive institution differs from a moral one in durableness of obligation only in this, that it is repealable, whereas the other is not. But the regard due to the former is as firm as that which is due to the latter, till it be repealed. That a repeal has actually taken place, may sometimes be known without a formal notice. This was the case of the Mosaic ritual, and of sacrifices. These were not only positive laws, but ceremonial. They were typical of Christ; and therefore when the work and sufferings of the Great Antitype were accomplished, they would of course have ceased to be valid, even if no information had been given in the New Testament to that effect. But every positive law is not typical, nor does every one contain circumstances in it or about it, which show that it is intended to cease being in force after a certain period; and when it does not, its repeal cannot take place, without a formal notice to that purpose from the same authority that instituted it. This is the case of the seventh day sabbath. There is nothing in the law itself, as recorded in Genesis 2. or Exodus 20. that limits its duration to a given time, except it be, that it is the memorial of something temporary, namely, of the Creation. The law must, therefore, last as long as the world stands, except notice be given to the contrary; and this notice will (as was said before) with the seventh day

abolish the seventh part of time, which owes its obligatory power solely to the former, and will consequently need a new institution in order to recover it.

I cannot but observe, in conclusion, that the common expression ‘Jewish sabbath,’ if indicative of the seventh day sabbath belonging to the Jews exclusively, can only be proper in the event of a repeal having taken place with regard to the Gentiles, that confines the obligation of keeping it holy to the Jews: for it appears, from what has been said, that prior to such a repeal, the sanctification of it was no more obligatory upon them, than it was upon all other nations.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the supposed Repeal of the Seventh Day Weekly Sabbath.*

WERE the sanctification of the seventh or last day of the week moral in the proper sense of the term, as a dictate of reason, and discoverable by the light of nature, it would not be repealable. For though an act usually moral may be dispensed with, or one of the contrary description be authorized or commanded occasionally by the Au-

thor and Preserver of those relationships on which morality depends, to answer some highly important purpose of which He alone can be the judge, (as the second marriage after the Creation—the attempted offering up of Isaac—and the connexions formed by the prophet Hosea with different females,) yet it does not appear that these deviations could take place for a continuance, or that a moral disposition could be dispensed with in any instance whatsoever. But the law enacted in Paradise respecting the seventh day weekly sabbath has been shown (as the seventh part of time, had that been sanctified abstractedly, would have been) to be a positive institution, and moral only on account of certain extraordinary circumstances in which it resembles a moral precept; it is therefore liable to a repeal.

It is proper, however, to observe, that there are several considerations which render it not a little improbable that it would be repealed. The Creation, the completion of which was the occasion of its institution, will last till the end of time. The institution celebrates a work interesting no less to every other nation, than to the Jews; to people living under the Christian dispensation, than to those who lived under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. It is a work most magnificent, extensive, and perfect, as originally

made; splendid and beautiful, beneficial, and commensurate in duration with the present state of existence allotted to mankind, through an uninterrupted series of generations for several thousands of years. That an institution would be caused to cease many ages before such a work, the completion of which was the cause of it, and on account of which it had continued for four thousand years, or that that day should be set aside which is the only true and proper representative of the day on which the event took place whence *sabbath* derives its name, seems not very likely. There is as much need since the Christian dispensation, as there was before, that man should be reminded, weekly and appropriately, of nature's originating in something supernatural, and that this visible series of causes and effects was under the government and control of an intelligent, though invisible Being. Infinitely superior as Redemption is to Creation in difficulty, grandeur, and importance, it could not have existed without the other; and as it has two ordinances for its commemoration, there seems to be no necessity for that purpose to deprive the other of the only one which has been appointed for celebrating its origin. The extraordinary sacrifices which the Jews offered on the seventh day in compliance with the divine command, and the offering of which was the principal act of

public religion by which they distinguished the sabbath from other days before the Babylonish captivity, plainly show, that attention to the Gospel is not unsuitable to the day : and most of the evangelical topics insisted upon by Christian ministers, relate as much to that day as they do to any other. In a word, there seems no utility in repealing the old sabbath to substitute another, since the latter would relieve from no burden, nor promote the ends of civilization, morality, and religion, better than the other.

Notwithstanding, however, these presumptions against a repeal of the seventh day sabbath, it is by no means meant to deny the possibility of such an abrogation. The contrary has already been distinctly admitted. The sole question, therefore, is respecting the matter of fact, whether the repeal has actually ever taken place. Here it will probably be asked, Who denies, or even doubts it? The Christian world at large has indeed for many centuries avowed that opinion. I cannot under this head, as under the former heads, produce authors of contrary sentiments among the observers of the first day, before or since the days of Constantine the Great. I cannot bring forward persons of this description, eminent for learning, piety, and station, in the Latin and Greek churches, or among the Protestants in the Establishment or out of it, who

have called in question the reality of the repeal, much less denied it. Yet the Christian world, though so generally in favour of the affirmative, has never been universally so: and though individuals belonging to various descriptions of religious people have not stepped forward to oppose the common sentiment, yet numbers of Christians, especially during the early ages, have ever opposed it in practice, and some, within the two last centuries, in writing. Ever since the Reformation, if not long before, they have composed a body of themselves, and borne a distinct title; nor have they been without persons of considerable learning, piety, and property, though not so extensively known as those among their opponents.

The reader will perhaps perceive, without difficulty, that I refer to the Christians called *Sabbatarians*, of whom I now proceed to give the following short account; premising that to these people I think it my duty to attach myself.

The Sabbatarians derive their appellation from the peculiar tenet held by them concerning the Scriptural weekly sabbath, as being the last day of the week *since* our Lord's resurrection, as well as *before* it. They make their appearance in the history of the Church, as early as their Christian brethren who are of a different opinion



from them in this particular. Their sabbath is said by the historians Socrates and Sozomon to have been kept, in conjunction with the first day, every where among the Christians, except at Rome and Alexandria, for upwards of three centuries.\* Accordingly the seventh day and the first day are called *Sisters* by Gregory Nyssen. Strong remonstrances were made against not keeping both days by St. Ignatius and others, and penalties were ordered, by the Councils of Trullo and Laodicea, to be inflicted on clergymen who did not observe both days as festivals.†

At length Constantine, the first Christian emperor, issued a proclamation about A. D. 321, in favour of the first day solely;‡ which was followed by several others similar to it. In consequence of these edicts, which strictly enforced the observance of the first day, without making the smallest provision for the seventh day, that

\* See Morer's *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, p. 188, 189.

† Ibid.

‡ According to Eusebius, Constantine ordered, in the same decree, the observance of the other days consecrated to Christ, to the Saints, and to the Martyrs. This he did, not as executing the decree of a council of which he was president, but without even calling one.—*Bampfild's Inquiry*, A. D. 1692, p. 97.

had hitherto been upon an equality with the other, the Sabbatarians, like all other religious bodies that found themselves aggrieved by imperial and ecclesiastical mandates, seem to have retired into Abyssinia;\* for there, as Scaliger, and Brerewood, the professor of astronomy, inform us, they still remained in the time of Queen Elizabeth.†

Whither they retired in Europe, after the decrees of Constantine, does not appear. But most probably, like many other bodies of people who could not in conscience accede to all the decisions of princes and councils on religious

\* According to Dr. Buchanan, in his *Christian Researches*, the Armenian Christians have always kept the seventh day sabbath, and still keep it.

† There were, however, traces for many centuries in the Latin and Greek churches, of the sacred regard once paid by Christians in general to the seventh day sabbath; as appears from the *Magdeburg Centuries*, and from *Lucius's Ecclesiastical History*. See *Bampfield's Inquiry*, p. 90. Bampfield also refers to Brerewood and others to prove these facts. So late as A. D. 673 a general council was held at Constantinople, at which the Emperor presided, and Legates were present from the Pope. The seventh day was ordered to be kept as a festival, agreeably to the tradition and custom of the Church; and if any one in the Church of Rome fasted on that day any more than on the first day, it was ordered that he should be deposed or excommunicated, according as he was a clerk or a laick. p. 101.

subjects, they took refuge in the valleys of Piedmont.\* From these they emerged, it would seem, about the beginning of the Reformation; since, according to Bishop White, history associates them, in the time of Luther, with the people called Anabaptists, in Germany. Their state in England, during the seventeenth century, was sufficiently important to draw the attention of Professors Brerewood and Wallis, who wrote against them; as also did White, Bishop of Ely, by the direction of Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. There were Sabbatarians among the Refugees who came over to this country from France. A century or two ago, there were several congregations of Sabbatarians in London, and also congregations of them in many of the counties in England:† but their state in this country at present is very low. However, in the United States of North America, whither some of them went from England during the reigns of the Stuarts, they have greatly increased

\* Mosheim mentions two sects of Sabbatarian Christians among the Waldenses, &c. of the Alps and Lombardy, in the 12th century. There were many, also, in Transylvania in the 14th century.—*Hubbard*.

† According to Hubbard, (an American writer,) there were nine or ten churches in England about A. D. 1668, beside many Sabbatarians that were not members any where.

within these few years. One of their churches has nine hundred members. Another of them, in the year 1820, received an accession of one hundred and forty members in the space of seven months. Among their communities are two churches, the foundations of which were laid by persons from Germany and Scotland; from the former in 1720.

With respect to their religious principles, so far as is known, they have always been, and still are, connected with that description of Christians, which in this country bear the name of Protestant Dissenters, and more particularly with that denomination of them called *Antipædobaptists*, or *Baptists*. But they do not all hold the same doctrinal tenets, either here or elsewhere, any more than the other descriptions of Christians. Those to whom I belong are styled *Particular* or *Calvinistic Baptists*. Their creed may be found in the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, and in the Assemblies' Catechism.

Having given this short account of the Sabbatarians, I proceed, in their name and in my own, respectfully to state my reasons for differing from the Christian public on the question relative to the repeal of the seventh day sabbath.

Though the possibility of such a repeal cannot justly be denied, since a weekly sabbath can only

be, properly speaking, a positive institution, yet the considerations already adduced in support of its improbability are so strong, in my opinion, that it ought to be well substantiated, before it is supposed that the old sabbath can be quitted with propriety and safety. Let it not be said that a repeal was unnecessary either for Jews or Gentiles; unnecessary for the Jews, because their obligation to keep the seventh day ceased of itself when they ceased to 'dwell alone,' to be the peculiar people of God, and to enjoy extraordinary privileges, civil and religious; unnecessary for the Gentiles, as never having been subject to the law, and as requiring only the non-existence of an injunction to keep it. In opposition to such an objection, I have already shown that the Jews were bound to keep this law prior to its being given to them at Mount Sinai, and even if it had never been given to them at all; or if they had never been distinguished from other nations by peculiar marks of the divine favour. I have also shown that the Gentiles were never exempt from subjection to it, since it was enjoined upon our first parents and all their posterity at the Creation. They were, therefore, obliged to keep it, as well as the Jews, except they were told to the contrary by proper authority; and (as was said before) there was no need of the apostle's exhorting them to it, as there would

have been in the case of a new duty, especially as there were subjects of far greater importance to them to be insisted upon. With respect to their ignorance or forgetfulness of this duty, the institution recorded both in Gen. 2. 2, 3. and in the Fourth Commandment, which they would find on searching the Old Testament, (as they were ordered to do,) and which the Jews everywhere supported by their example, was abundantly sufficient to remind them of it. Nor did they ever show any reluctance to comply with their duty in this respect, so far as can be judged from the Acts of the Apostles.

Neither could the repeal be reasonably inferred from the repeal of other laws at the close of the Jewish dispensation. For though the law relative to the seventh day sabbath was positive, it was not ceremonial. It had no reference whatever to Christ, and therefore did not, like the law of sacrifices, and many other institutions, terminate by his sufferings and death. It was not, like circumcision, binding only upon the natural descendants of Abraham, and consequently did not end, like it, when the Jews ceased to be the people of God exclusively. In short, a distinct, specific, and separate repeal is wanted, for the abrogation of the seventh-day sabbath.



I now proceed to consider those passages in the New Testament which are thought to imply the repeal in question. The text which has most the appearance of it, is Colossians 2. 16. If, however, the word *sabbaths* in that verse is to be understood universally of *all* sabbaths, without exception, it must include the sabbath of those who oppose the Sabbatarians; for this sabbath must have existed at that time, supposing it ever to have existed by apostolic authority. If, on the other hand, the observers of the first day consider the limitation of the term not inadmissible, the Sabbatarians have an equal right to consider the limitation of it not inadmissible.\* In fact, both parties do limit it; the former confining it to the sabbaths kept by the Jews, including the weekly sabbath, that was binding upon all other nations as well as upon them, the latter confining it to the sabbaths that were peculiar to the

\* The object of the Apostle seems to be, to relieve the Gentile converts from a burden. But how is the observance of the seventh day, in the manner inculcated by Christ, a greater burden than the observance of the first day would have been? Neither is the seventh day sabbath more a shadow than any other medium of divine grace, compared with the blessings conveyed through that medium, or than the first day is. The institution of the seventh part of time is truly a shadow, of which that of the seventh day is the body.

Jews—that is, to their monthly and annual sabbaths. The Sabbatarians ground their opinion on the context. The weekly sabbath is indeed sometimes mentioned in the law of Moses in conjunction with feasts peculiar to the Jews, because it was a positive institution and a festival, as they were; but it never was a shadow, of which Christ was the body, as the new moons and all the ordinances of the ceremonial law were; and therefore it is of these, and of these only, that the apostle shows himself to be speaking. With these holydays the seventh day sabbath is not so much as connected here, nor had it any more to do with them than fornication had to do with ‘things offered to idols, and things strangled, and blood,’ though it is enumerated with them in Acts 15. The law of the seventh day sabbath, though positive, as that of any sabbath cannot but be, (which has already been proved at large,) yet never formed a part of the ceremonial law of the Jews. It existed before man had any need of Christ; it therefore had no reference to the gospel, and was instituted on quite a different account. The Jews kept it, it is true; and so they kept, or ought to have kept, the other precepts of the Decalogue: but there is no more reason for thinking that this precept shared the fate of their peculiarities, than that the others did. It should also be recollected, that if

the text under consideration be subversive of the seventh day sabbath, it is equally subversive of the sacred regard due to the seventh part of time; it is also subversive of the rest of the Fourth Commandment. For the holy character of the seventh part of time arises out of and depends upon the original institution of the seventh day; and therefore no day will be left for us to keep holy: and any new sabbath by divine appointment will stand upon its own ground entirely, independent both of the institution in Paradise, and of the Fourth Commandment.

I may add, that if the passage in question repealed the weekly sabbath that was kept by the Jews, it would repeal a sabbath that was equally obligatory on the Gentiles. For it existed long before the time of the Jews—as early, indeed, as there was a human being to keep it; and though it was delivered afresh to the Jews at Mount Sinai, so were the other precepts of the Decalogue, which no one ever thought not to belong to the Gentiles, or to be repealed at the close of the former dispensation, as being Jewish. But the term *sabbath* in the commandment which God is said there to have blessed and hallowed, is the *seventh day*; for so it is called in Gen. 2. 2, 3. to which the commandment refers. I have already shown in what respects it was a sign between the Jews and the Gentiles consistently with its

being obligatory on the latter, and that the contrary supposition infers the abrogation of the whole of the Fourth Commandment, as well as of the seventh day sabbath.\*

As the term *sabbaths*, or *sabbath days*, (Col. 2. 16.) is limited in its sense by the context, so is the word *days*, (Gal. 4. 10.) as also the application of the Apostle's remarks (Rom. 14.) relative

\* The ingenious and learned Dr. Wallis thinks that the word *sabbath*, in the verse that has been considered, cannot possibly mean the monthly or annual sabbaths of the Jews, because the Apostle refers not to the Jews in their own country, but to the Asiatic Jews, who, according to the law of Moses, could not keep them, not being at Jerusalem. But he forgets that these Jews were in the habit of repairing to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, if not the other feasts; and that possibly the evil which the Apostle wished to correct was, in part at least, that they 'judged' their brother converts from among the Gentiles, for not taking the same inconvenient and hazardous journeys as they perhaps did. Besides, it is impossible for Dr. Wallis or for any one else to say that some deviations from the law of Moses might not be deemed lawful and necessary by the Hellenistic Jews, under their circumstances. This we know, that the Jews in England keep the Passover in some way, notwithstanding the restrictions of that law. That the Apostle, in Col. 2. 16. has the ceremonial law of the Jews solely in view, seems evident from his expostulation with the Colossians a few verses afterwards—'Why are ye subject to ordinances? (Touch not; taste not; handle not.)'

to 'keeping or not keeping a day to the Lord.' The context in both places shows that he is speaking, not of positive institutions exclusively by divine authority, but either of the Mosaic ritual, which though once binding on the Jews was no longer so, or else of abstinences and observances which the Divine Being has neither commanded nor forbidden. While, therefore, he casts no censure upon the religious observation of any day, be it what day it may, he does not mean to represent it as justifiable in any one to 'esteem every day alike' in opposition to a divine institution, whether an old one, like the seventh day weekly sabbath, that had nothing to do with the Mosaic ritual, or with the Jews exclusively, and that remained unrepealed, or a divine institution that was new. The explanation just given must be acquiesced in by every one who believes that there is a certain day of the week obligatory upon Christians to be sanctified as the weekly sabbath, whether it be the seventh, the first, or any other day; or, indeed, whether the Scriptures name it or not: as, for instance, if they had merely instituted the seventh part of time abstractedly. I will add, that it is perfectly incredible that a day consecrated on so great an occasion—a day enjoined upon man as soon as he existed, and upon all his posterity without any distinction—a day, the reason for

sanctifying which indicated that it was to continue sacred as long as the creation lasted, and which was in itself as adequate to any holy or beneficial purpose as that of any other could be—a day, in short, the observance of which was as highly important as ever to the beast as well as to man, and to mankind at large both in a civil and religious view—should be dismissed indirectly by means of expressions so slight, general, and ambiguous, as those used in the texts that have been considered.

Such are the reasons for which the Sabbatarians feel compelled, in opposition to their Christian brethren, to deny the sufficiency of the texts that are relied upon to prove the *direct* repeal of the seventh day weekly sabbath. I propose now to examine certain circumstances which have been thought to amount to an *indirect* proof of it. The circumstances are—that the apostles never tell the converts, if Jews, to continue, or, if Gentiles, to commence keeping it—and that the inspired writers of the Acts and the Epistles record no instance in which Christians, as such, held a meeting on it for a religious purpose, much less state that such a meeting was sanctioned by the presence of an apostle, and that he took a leading part in it.

Before I reply to these observations, I beg leave to ask those who make them, whether they



would deem them sufficient (admitting the correctness of them) to set aside the old sabbath, if they did not think that there was a new one to substitute for it by divine authority? For if they would not deem the observations adequate to the purpose for which they are made in the case supposed, neither ought they to deem them sufficient in the contrary case. I proceed to examine the observations.

The first of them infers the repeal of the seventh day sabbath from the silence of the apostles about it, in addressing the converts. But what occasion was there for the inspired missionaries to address persons concerning a law which they had always been under, which they knew they were under, which they were in the habit of obeying, and which they knew of no reason for not continuing to obey? This was unquestionably the case of the Jews, and no less of the Gentiles, if the accounts given of them by the first-day writers, and which have been referred to before, may be depended on, so far as relates to practice, whatever might be their idea concerning the origin of their keeping the day sacred, and of the extent to which it was to be so kept. It was merely necessary for the apostles to forbid their hearers to keep it any longer, or to tell them that it was not requisite to begin keeping it. This might have been expected, had the sacred

heralds intended to repeal it, since nothing had happened to make the people think of their own accord that it was repealed, the reason for the original institution continuing the same as ever. They really did this in the cases of sacrifice and circumcision; though the last of these, being given to the descendants of Abraham only, might be supposed to lose its claim to regard when they ceased to be a peculiar people—at any rate not to be binding upon any who never were the peculiar people; and the first ceased naturally the moment the Great Sacrifice was offered.

So far, however, from a repeal being announced respecting the seventh day sabbath, we find the inspired writers after Christ's ascension uniformly continuing to call it by its old name, *the sabbath day*, without ever intimating that they only did so because the day had been or was still kept peculiarly by the Jews—and what is more, without ever giving the appellation to any other day.

No one doubts that the Gentiles, when they became Jews, kept the seventh day as a matter of course, finding both the institution and the practice connected with the true religion revealed in the Old Testament. Was it not natural for them to continue or to commence doing the same when they became Christians, except they

were told, or had examples set them, to the contrary? Why was it more necessary to tell them to do so in the latter case, than it was in the former? There is no proof that the apostles or the first Christians ever treated the seventh day as secular. The transactions at Troas certainly do not prove that Paul and the disciples did not keep the seventh day. There is not the slightest hint that the Gentiles at Antioch, in Pisidia, upon embracing Christianity, kept a different day from that which they kept while they were Jewish proselytes, or that they thought themselves at liberty to renounce the seventh day, because they were not told to continue keeping it. Similar silence was observed at Lydia's conversion; yet there is no reason to think that she quitted the sabbath which she kept when she used to resort along with the other women to the river side.

The apostles were too much occupied in urging the essentials of religion and of Christianity to preach upon the subject of the weekly sabbath, (which, however important, is only a circumstantial of religion,) except something extraordinary had called their attention to it. As the universal and continued obligation of the seventh day sabbath was never disputed or resisted by any of the converts, it was sufficient to enjoin the study of the Old Testament, where they would find an

account of it, if they needed it, both in Gen. 2. 2, 3. and in the Fourth Commandment. Whether the converts were from among the Jews or the Gentiles, they were made to understand that they were to regard every part of the Old Testament, except the ceremonial law, and that which related to the political economy of the Jews; neither of which, as has been shown, excluded the weekly sabbath.

The other indirect proof adduced in support of the supposed repeal under consideration is, that there is no case on divine record in which an apostle authorized, presided at, or concurred in, any religious act performed or to be performed by Christians as Christians, or indeed of any Christian assembly being held for a religious purpose, on the seventh day. I reply, that it is not true that no religious meetings or religious acts of Christians, as such, are recorded as taking place on this day. We are told (Acts 2. 46.) that meetings and acts of this kind took place among them 'daily;' and if they took place every day, they of course took place on the seventh day. Nor does it follow that the seventh day ceased to retain the exclusive right to sanctification it had hitherto possessed, on account of religious acts being performed in Christian assemblies on other days likewise. 'Breaking of bread,' too, is expressly mentioned as taking

place 'daily;' on the seventh day as well as on other days: and there is as much reason to understand by it celebrating the Lord's supper in this text, as in Acts 20. 7.\*

But were the passage in Acts 2. 46. wanting, it would by no means follow that the Christians did not hold religious assemblies or perform religious acts on the day in question, merely because there is no account of them. It is not necessary to the proof of a law which was uniformly regarded for ages continuing in force at a certain period, that examples of obedience to it should be produced during that period. It is enough that there were examples of it a little before—that there has been no notice of a repeal—and that nothing has intervened which justified the expectation of a repeal, or which, without such notice, tended to or warranted future disregard. It may be presumed that obedience to a law continues to proceed in its usual course, when nothing is stated to have happened to annul the obligation, or to interrupt the habit of obedience. It was the duty of the Jews, when they became Christians, still to keep the seventh day sabbath, and of the Gentiles, on their con-

\* The word *meat* in Acts 2. 46. occurs also in Acts 47. 35, &c. where there is no mention of any thing, except of *bread*, and of *wheat*,



version, to commence keeping it, as they always did, when they became Jewish proselytes, if they did not keep it before, (which it was their duty to have done, and which testimonies, as I have already shown, are not wanting to prove that they did in some way and to a certain extent,) except they were informed to the contrary, of which there is not the slightest appearance. The mere change of dispensation was not adapted to release either Jews or Gentiles from an obligation which commenced at the Creation, and the reason for which was as weighty and as universally interesting as ever—a reason which could not be affected by the recovery of man, because it existed before his fall. The sabbath in being was as much wanted after our Lord's death as before, for civil, moral, and religious purposes; and in the absence of any declaration to the contrary, seems as proper for promoting them as any other sabbath whatever. It was as proper in itself, as has been before observed, for explaining and applying the glorious facts and truths of the gospel, as any other day; as appears from the double sacrifices which the Jews used to offer on it, and from the religious services now performed on it by the Sabbatarians, who expatiate as much upon the gospel on their sabbath, as the advocates of the first day do on their's.



With respect to the authority for abandoning the old sabbath on account of no one of the great events, or of a particular event, not having taken place on it, no one, I suppose, will say that the converts would be justified in doing this as a matter of course, without a divine permission or injunction—especially since the events referred to for the most part no more happened on the first day than on the seventh, and since they were already commemorated and celebrated by two ordinances which Christ himself instituted; whereas the Creation would be without any institution for its commemoration and improvement, if the seventh day ceased to be kept holy. That such permission or injunction exists, could not, for the reasons just stated, be anticipated or expected. There has been no proof of it hitherto, nor would the new sabbath be less burdensome than the former was, from the foregoing considerations.

Since, then, the first converts had no cause to question, either from the nature of the case, or from any intimation given or act performed by an apostle, the continuance of a law that had existed from the beginning of time, and which was of universal obligation—a law which the Jews had always kept, and which there is very great reason to think that the Gentiles themselves in some respects kept, (as it was their

incumbent duty to do,) though they had probably forgotten the origin of it; there would be no just ground for supposing that the first converts had discontinued the practice, were the instance already stated wanting, by which it appears that they met together and performed religious acts on the seventh day as well as on other days. Instances are not wanted to prove the continuance of that which there was no cause for discontinuing. No inspired person ever secularized the seventh day, nor indeed any one else, so far as appears from the Scriptures. The silence of the sacred writers, therefore, on the subject of their keeping it, would not prove that they did not keep it, (since they say nothing to the contrary,) even were it total, or not at all to be accounted for. But their silence has been shown not to be total; and that it is so great as it is, may, in my opinion, be very easily and satisfactorily accounted for. There is not any thing surprising in the supposition that the apostles might seldom or never be present at Christian assemblies held on the day in question. Their missionary character in general required their attendance at other places of public resort—particularly at the synagogues of the Jews, on account of the great opportunities afforded them at these times and places of diffusing the glad tidings of salvation more widely. In that case,

the Christians might keep the day socially as well as individually, publicly as well as privately, without any remarkable occurrence, especially of a miraculous nature, taking place; the apostles, and perhaps not only they, but their disciples and 'fellow-helpers,' and in general all others whose instrumentality was usually employed in working miracles, being absent for the reason just stated. Were this the fact, nothing ever passed or happened at these meetings, except the routine of holy duties; and it could not be expected that any thing said or done by Christians, or any event that took place among them, except what was singular, of general interest, or of lasting importance, would be inserted in a work like that of the sacred historian Luke and the Epistles of the apostles, which was not intended for a diary or for minute details relative to particular individuals and churches, but to furnish a general view of characters and occurrences that were principally connected with the rise and progress of Christianity.

Let no one think, that in supposing the absence of every thing extraordinary from the Christian meetings on the seventh day to have occasioned the silence of the sacred writers about them, I have been substituting hypothesis for fact. There is no one that doubts but the Jews kept the seventh day between the death of Moses and that

of Samuel. Irreligious as the Jews in general were, there were not wanting pious characters among them during that period—a period of between four and five hundred years; yet we have no evidence of the fact that they did actually keep it.

What can the silence of the sacred historians be owing to, but to the cause just mentioned? On the other hand, it is evident that we should not have known from sacred history that the Jews kept it in our Lord's time and that of his apostles, or that he kept it himself, had it not been for extraordinary and even miraculous occurrences on that day. In our own country, the celebration of the 5th of November is never noticed by historians from the time of its appointment for celebration till the year of the Revolution; nor would it have been mentioned then, had not the historian Rapin been reminded of it by the landing of the Prince of Orange in 1688 about that time of the year; but no one would have doubted that the English did observe it during the period of between eighty and ninety years that preceded, if Rapin had continued silent about it, since

\* The silence of the inspired writers under consideration relates to a period of no more than sixty years, and therefore is not so much adapted to shake the credit of the institution's continuance as the former silence was.

nothing is stated to warrant the contrary opinion.

There is one circumstance which appears to me impossible to be accounted for, if the apostles really authorized the Jewish converts by precept or by example to forsake the old sabbath, or if the Gentile converts did not continue to keep it or embrace it; and that is, the profound silence observed by the unbelieving Jews, and the total absence of controversy from the Christian churches on the occasion. The indignation repeatedly manifested by the Jews when our Lord performed cures on the sabbath-day, as well as the testimony of profane history, clearly shows that they were no less enthusiastically attached to the day they sanctified, than they were to circumcision: and how tremblingly alive they were to the claim of the latter—even those of them who believed, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul abundantly prove. They insisted that the believing Gentiles could not be saved without it; they compelled the latter to appeal to the church at Jerusalem; they urged their favourite tenet in the council of the apostles and elders: and notwithstanding the solemn decree passed by the council, with the concurrence of the Holy Ghost, in favour of exempting the Gentile converts from obligation to be circumcised, and the tranquillity which the knowledge



of the decree restored to the churches in general, yet the sharp remonstrances of the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, plainly show that the dissensions had by no means subsided in these parts. But how does the case stand with respect to the seventh day sabbath, for which the Jews were equally, if not still more, zealous? Do we read of any animosities or outrages of the unbelieving Jews, which must have been the consequence if the apostles had repealed the old sabbath? Did they ever express their displeasure against the neglect or violation of it, now supposed to be general at that time among Christians, as they did on the mere appearance of either in our Lord's time? Do the Jewish converts ever remonstrate against being called upon, supposing them to have been so, to leave their favourite day, or insist upon the Gentiles keeping it upon their becoming Christians, if they did not keep it before? Is there any reason to think that they would be less tenacious on this point, had they been required to give it up, or more liberally minded towards a Gentile brother, had he differed from them in this particular, than they were respecting circumcision? Were there any dissensions among the Christians, any appeals to the apostles and elders, any decrees under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit on the subject? It is well known that there



was nothing of the kind. For though the passages Col. 2. 16. Gal. 4. 10. and Rom. 14. 5. have been considered as indicative of controversy among Christians on the subject of the weekly sabbath, and also of remonstrance on the part of the sacred writer against censuring the non-observance of the seventh day, the context (as I have already shown) proves that they relate to a different topic; and my opponents must at least allow them to be ambiguous: whereas the obligation of circumcision on the Gentiles is reprobated by the inspired penmen in terms that cannot possibly admit of any other meaning.\*

I am aware that when Paul says, 'to the Jews I became as a Jew,' it has been thought that he did so by conforming to them in keeping the seventh day himself, and in conniving at its being kept by others, though he knew of its repeal. Were this the fact, it would at least prove that the silence of the sacred writers concerning the Christians' keeping the seventh day is no proof that they did not keep it. But the case of

\* The texts referred to, however, are not ambiguous. They cannot relate to any dispute between the Jewish and the Gentile converts about the seventh day sabbath. For why should the latter object to it when they became Christians, any more than they did when they became Jews? If, on the other hand, the Jewish converts did not keep it, how could it occasion disputes?

his circumcising Timothy, (an act then unnecessary by divine law,) though the father of Timothy was a Greek, 'because of the Jews that were in that quarter,' (and who knew that Timothy's father was not a Jew,) is a sufficient illustration of the apostle's assertion, without any other instance; and were any other instance really wanting, to supply the defect by explaining the words as already stated, without the apostle's authority, is 'begging the question,' or taking that for granted which remains to be proved.

The unwillingness of the apostle and his companions to give offence to the Jews, whether unbelievers or believers, by exempting any, whether Jew or Gentile, from obligation to 'keep holy the seventh day,' has also been attributed to the continuance of the temple at Jerusalem, the daily services there, especially those on the sabbath, and the attention still paid by the Jewish nation to the Mosaic institutions, though abrogated. They are thought, therefore, to have kept and treated the old sabbath, as Paul conformed to the customs of the Nazarites the day on which the Jews took him in the temple; at least, then, as before noticed, the seventh day was kept by the Christians, notwithstanding the silence of the sacred writers: and how does it appear, from them, that it was not to be kept after the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as before?

If it had been true that the seventh day sabbath was a part of the religious or civil economy peculiar to the Jews, and therefore to cease when they ceased, the Fourth Commandment, according to what was proved in the last Chapter, must have gone with them. But the seventh day sabbath, as has been shown already, formed no part of the Mosaic ritual, nor did it belong to the Jews more than to any other nation, being instituted at the close of the Creation, and on that account. If, then, it was kept by the apostles and the first believers till the destruction of Jerusalem, there is no reason to think that it was to cease being kept afterwards, since we are nowhere told that it would be no longer binding after that event. The ceremonial law was distinctly repealed, though, from the design of it having been answered, its repeal might have been presumed without a formal statement. How much more might such a repeal, if a repeal had been intended, have been looked for in a case where the abrogation could not be known without it, since the reason of the institution continued to be as important as ever? If nothing more than a temporary compliance with the prepossessions of the Jews in a matter of indifference had been meant by the sacred regard which the Christians paid to the seventh day before the destruction of Jerusalem, we should have been

informed of it, as the apostle Paul acquaints us with the abridgement of his liberty, which he imposed upon himself in the cases of eating meat and drinking wine. Since neither he nor any of his companions or followers allege any such reason for adhering to the old sabbath, which they did cheerfully and universally adhere to, it follows that they did not act from a temporising and accommodating spirit, but in compliance with an incumbent duty.

Thus the *indirect* proof of the repeal of the seventh day sabbath fails, in my opinion, as well as the *direct* proof. I indeed consider as positive evidence to the contrary, our Lord's exhortation to his disciples to pray that their flight from Jerusalem, when threatened to be encompassed by armies, might not take place on 'the sabbath day.' There was certainly no other sabbath day in being at that time, except the one which is inculcated in the Fourth Commandment. The disciples, therefore, must have understood their Divine Master as speaking of that sabbath day. He says nothing to prevent their thus understanding his meaning, and their expressing themselves in prayer according to that meaning. It is far more natural to suppose that our Lord referred to the disturbance which their own devotion, and that of the pious in general, would be in danger of receiving in the case imagined, than

to any they might suffer from the acts of devotion continued to be performed by the Jews on an obsolete sabbath. Of course, if I am right in my interpretation of the texts which have been noticed, the seventh day sabbath was to continue forty years after our Lord's ascension; nor is the slightest intimation given that it was then to cease.

To conclude.—Though it is commonly supposed that the seventh day is called *sabbath* in the sacred writings after our Lord's resurrection merely as belonging exclusively to the Jews, and as being observed by them, and that the apostles attended at the synagogues on that day merely as pursuing their missionary work among the Jews, there is not a tittle of evidence to support either conjecture. The sacred writers never intimate any thing of the kind. Till it be proved from other sources that a repeal was wanted, expected, and announced by divine authority, the seventh day, in still being called sabbath, only retained the name to which it was exclusively entitled both among Jews and Gentiles; and the apostles, in attending to their missionary labours on the day, proposed likewise to sanctify that day which it was their duty to 'keep holy.'

Let it not be objected to the conclusiveness of the foregoing reasoning, that from the non-repeal of the seventh day sabbath, the inconveni-



ence would follow of sanctifying two days in a week. I own the inconvenience, and, as well as all other Christians, think it utterly improbable that the Divine Being would require this. I am ready to admit, further, that the non-repeal should not be acquiesced in without the greatest care, considering how long and how extensively the contrary idea has prevailed. At the same time, I must observe, that caution in examining evidence should not be confined to the case of retaining the old sabbath, but be extended to the case of receiving a new one.

The Sabbatarians, therefore, cannot agree with their Christian brethren in calling the seventh day sabbath the *Jewish* sabbath, as if it ever had belonged, or continued to belong, exclusively to them. So far from it, that they always call it *Sabbath*, and never call any other day by that name. They can admit the propriety of the phrase only in the sense in which *Jewish* Scriptures and *Jewish* God are commonly understood.

The Sabbatarians, however, are not the only people who ever demurred to the repeal of the seventh day sabbath. The ancient Fathers never once affirm it, much less do they ever plead Scripture in support of it. With respect to the sacred regard that continued to be paid to the seventh day, after the apostolic age, I have



already referred to the earliest writers among the Christians to prove the fact, and shall now proceed to quote the words of Morer relative to it, *p.* 187—189.

‘Socrates tells us, that all churches over the world, excepting those of Alexandria and of Rome, set apart as well Saturday as Sunday for religious uses; even the Egyptians and those who dwelt in Thebais, borderers on Alexandria, complied, and had on both days prayers and collections. Sozomen has the same exception of Rome and Alexandria, but (to use his own words) all or most of the other churches carefully observed the sabbath. And so great stress was laid on keeping it, that Gregory Nyssen expostulates thus: ‘With what eyes can you behold the Lord’s day, when you despise the sabbath? Do you not perceive they are sisters, and that in slighting the one you affront the other? And as sisters, we find them go hand in hand in the Ecclesiastical Canons. ‘If any clergyman be found fasting on the Lord’s day, or the sabbath, let him be suspended.’—*Canon 66. Apost.*’ And in the Sixth Council of Trullo, the canons obliged all people to fast throughout Lent, except on the sabbath and the Lord’s day. And so they are joined together in the 49th and 51st Canons of the Council of Laodicea. But the words of St. Ignatius are very severe; (*Epist. ad Philip.*)

‘If any man fast on the Lord’s day, or on the sabbath, except that before Easter, he murders Christ again:’ and no wonder, seeing we find it among the constitutions of the Church in St. Clement, that we celebrate as festivals the sabbath and the Lord’s day. This is done in memory of the Resurrection, and that of the Creation. Elsewhere the same author makes both days of rest, that so servants may have opportunity to go to church, to hear and learn the duties of religion. ‘In sum,’ says Balsamon, ‘the holy Fathers make the sabbath and the Lord’s day to stand on the same ground, and they were equally respected in ancient times.’ Thus far Morer.

For upwards of three hundred years (as before noticed) the seventh day was thus kept by Christians in general, though in conjunction with the first day. Several parts of the extract just given deserve particular remark. Not only fathers, but councils, declare in favour of the old sabbath; and the language employed by them is not that of concern to have its observance connived at or tolerated, but of conviction that it was an important duty. St. Ignatius himself, who in another part of his writings is understood by some to urge the celebration of the first day *instead* of sabbatizing, in this part, on the contrary, enjoins it only *after* sabbatizing; reprobating the neg-

lect of the latter in the severest terms. The Apostolical Canons are not thought to be so early as they pretend to be; but the later the zeal was which they express for the seventh day sabbath, the more advantageous it is to the cause which it advocates. The Council at Trullo which declares on the same side, must also have been held late, as it was the sixth which sat there. Whether the Council of Laodicea which espouses the cause of the seventh day was that which sat there in the middle of the fourth century, is uncertain; but if it was, it is not a little remarkable that it should venture thus to express its sentiment in opposition to the decrees of Constantine which enjoin the observance of the first day, without mentioning the seventh day. Be that as it may, Gregory Nyssen must have had that boldness, since he lived at that time. Nor do the historians Socrates and Sozomen, both of whom lived in that century, (and the latter continued beyond the beginning of the fifth century,) display a small degree of it, in stating, as they do, both the period during which Sabbatarianism (as it is now called) was practised, and the extent to which it prevailed. The first of these writers states (Lib. 5. Cap. 22.) not only the public observance of the seventh day in almost all the churches, with the exception of those in Rome and Alexandria, in the fourth century,

but also that the ‘holy mysteries were performed on it.’

St. Ignatius, indeed, according to Bishop White, exhorts the Christians to work on the sabbath, quoting the apostle’s words, ‘If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.’ This, however, is no more than what the same learned writer shows the fathers in general to have done relative to the first day, not only while the Christians were subject to the idolaters, but for three centuries after the Roman empire became Christian. The exhortation of Ignatius implies, also, that the Christians with whom he was concerned in general abstained from working on the seventh day.

In England, even so late as some years before A. D. 1000,\* in the reign of Edgar, the seventh day was ordered to be sanctified from three o’clock in the afternoon, in addition to the whole of the first day: and this sacred regard for it continued, in consequence of different canons and proclamations, till the time of King John; that is, for more than two hundred years. Notwithstanding the present practice of defer-

\* The short account of the Sabbatarians in the preceding part of this Chapter contains some important particulars of their condition abroad between Constantine’s time and this period, as well as afterward.

ring the commencement of the national sabbath till twelve at midnight on the seventh day, I am not aware that the laws just referred to have ever been repealed. The Journals of Parliament, as well as the public schools, still, I believe, call the seventh day, in Latin, *Sabbath-day*, not *Saturday*: and it is a well-known fact that neither of the two Houses, in general, transact any business on that day.

The religious respect shown to the seventh day by the Christians at large during the first ages of Christianity, has been attributed to the reluctance of the Jewish converts to quit an old practice, and the deference paid to them by their Gentile brethren. At least, it is allowed that they both kept the seventh day for the most part at that time, notwithstanding the silence of Luke and the apostles. There was, however, no such deference shown in the case of circumcision. Had that been the case respecting the seventh day, the toleration of the seventh day would have been sufficient, without enjoining its observance; and if the latter was thought necessary or prudent, it will at least show that the numbers and strength of the Sabbatarians were not inconsiderable. But the conjecture proceeds upon the ground that the repeal of the seventh day sabbath has been proved from Scripture: for if that point be not established, there is



a more natural way of accounting for the harmony that subsisted among the Christians; namely, the conviction of the Jewish converts that it was their duty still to keep the seventh day, and that of the Gentile converts that their brethren from among the Jews, in adhering to the old sabbath, were doing no more than their duty, and what it was equally the duty of the Gentiles themselves to practise. Upon the supposition of the non-repeal, it would have been strange indeed, had the Jews, when they became Christians, acted otherwise than they did; and their abandonment of the old sabbath would no doubt have been brought forward as an unanswerable argument in support of the repeal. That the converts from the Jews should continue to keep the seventh day was no more than what might be expected, as the apostles gave no orders to the contrary; and if the converts from the Gentiles did not practise the same, they had occasion for the forbearance of their brethren, and not their brethren for their's.

There is not the least appearance, in the Fathers, that the Sabbatarian Christians were a new sect, sprung up since the time of the apostles. They are never charged with innovation in this respect; nor was their existence or continuance in the church ever accounted for in the way that is now under consideration, till modern



times. The churches at Rome and Alexandria, which, the historians tell us, contained no Sabbatarians, so far as is known, never pleaded Scripture, if they pleaded any thing else, as a reason for excluding them. That the arm of civil and ecclesiastical power should afterwards disperse, though not annihilate them, can excite no wonder; but Constantine and his successors, whether acting in a political or sacred character, when, in their decrees relative to observing the first day, they overlooked the seventh day, did not urge the authority of Inspiration for the omission. They even acted in opposition to the authority and example of the primitive church, without ever assigning the pretext which has since been invented for them, namely, that there were no longer any converts from among the Jews to render the toleration of their prepossessions in favour of the old sabbath, or conformity to them, necessary.\*

To return to the subject of the present Chapter.—There is a sense in which the advocates for the repeal of the seventh day sabbath may themselves be said to aid the cause of those who

\* This detail from Church History is given to satisfy a natural curiosity, and not to strengthen the reasoning which preceded it. The Bible is the religion of Protestants, not the opinions and precepts of men.

maintain that it is not repealed: I mean the adherence of the first day Christians in general to the Fourth Commandment. I am aware, indeed, that they do not profess to retain the whole of the commandment, or at least, if they do, that they do not understand the expression *sabbath* in it to mean 'the seventh day,' or this last to mean the last day of the week exclusively, but the seventh part of time; so that though the Jews were confined to the seventh day, Christians may keep another of the seven without violating the commandment. I have also shown, before, that the seventh part of time abstractedly was not the thing instituted, either in the commandment, or in Genesis 2. 2, 3., but that it was the consequence of the institution.\* The thing instituted relates only to the last day of the first week—the day on which God rested from the work of creation, and every seventh day afterwards in succession.† It was that day which the Fourth Commandment ordered the Jews to keep,

\* The seventh part of time was not instituted first, and the seventh day afterwards, either in Genesis 2. 2, 3. or in the Fourth Commandment.

† Moses and the Jews did not conceive that the first seventh day only was to be kept holy; nor do the first day Christians think that no other Sunday was to be kept except that on which Christ rose.

the day which in fact (as has been proved) they were keeping before the commandment was given from Mount Sinai—the day, the weekly return of which they now keep. If the commandment did not confine them to that day, there was nothing else that did. No one, however, conceives that the Jews were at liberty to keep any other day, or that they would have escaped the severest punishment, had they dared to keep another in the room of it. But as there was no other precept to bind them to the observance of the last day of the week in particular, except the Fourth Commandment, if that commandment only required in general the seventh part of time, they would have been at liberty to change the day, by keeping two sabbaths together, or by some other expedient.

The expression, then, in the commandment, ‘the seventh day,’ can only mean the last day of the week, as it was understood to mean by the Jews, and even by our Lord himself. So the holy women understood it, who rested on it according to the commandment. Of course it means the same to all who are subject to the Fourth Commandment. They are as much bound by it to keep the seventh day, as the Jews were. It never can mean a different thing after our Lord’s resurrection from what it did before—a different thing to different bodies of people

alike subject to the Fourth Commandment—a different thing to Christians from what it did to the Jews. It never can mean the last day of the week exclusively to the Jews, and to Christians only the seventh part of time. As the former were not at liberty to disregard the letter of the commandment under the notion of adhering to the spirit of it, so neither are the latter warranted in taking any such liberty.

But it will be asked, May not part of a law be repealed, and the rest continue in force? Undoubtedly it may, when the repeal relates to a circumstance, but not when it relates to the essence. Here the supposed repeal relates to the essence. For if the words ‘the seventh day’ be struck out, nothing will remain to be kept holy. The seventh part of time will not remain; for since it owes its right to consecration entirely to the seventh day, when the seventh day goes, it must go with it.\* The reason, too, assigned at the end of the commandment for its enactment must also vanish, as relating to the last day of the week, and to nothing else. The seventh day, therefore, cannot be

\* Had the seventh day sabbath been repealed before our Lord’s time, the Fourth Commandment would not have bound the Jews to keep any day, whatever reason or a new divine institution might have done.

cancelled without cancelling the whole ; and upon this account, whoever retains the rest of the precept (as Christians in general do) may be said virtually to deny the repeal of the seventh day sabbath.

It is true, the obligation to sanctify the seventh part of time might exist, and consequently continue, if reason supported it, without the commandment. But in that case the Fourth Commandment would have nothing to do with it. It might also be renewed by the Divine Being, either by the institution of it abstractedly, no day being named in particular, or by instituting a specific day, as was done at the Creation ; and I say nothing at present whether this last has or has not been done in the case of the first day. But if it be so, the Fourth Commandment cannot with propriety, any more than any other essentially amended or altered law, be considered in its present state as obligatory upon Christians. Before the words relative to the mode of keeping holy the sabbath day can be used, ‘the seventh part of time,’ or ‘the first,’ for instance, must be substituted for *seventh* ; and instead of the reason now given in the commandment for the divine institution of the seventh day, the following, or some such words, must be introduced :—‘for the sanctification of the seventh part of time is requisite for the purposes of civiliza-

tion, humanity, morality, and religion : therefore the Lord, &c.' Or thus :—'for the Lord Jesus Christ, having died for our sins, rose from the dead on the first day : therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.'

Whether the commandment would remain the same in substance with either of these alterations—whether the apostles have sanctioned either—or whether a real Christian can, without such a sanction, adopt either of them, must be left to every one's own conscience to determine.

At all events the Sabbatarian possesses this important advantage, that when he is present at church, and hears the solemn recital of the Fourth Commandment as now binding upon Christians, he can with the utmost sincerity toward God and man unite with the congregation in praying, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!'

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Differences of Opinion concerning the Claim of the First Day to be the Weekly Sabbath by Divine Authority.*

THE title of this Chapter will, I suppose, excite no small surprise in many, (should many ever hear of this little Work,) since Christians at large know not that any who bear that name think otherwise than that the first day is the weekly sabbath according to the New Testament. I imagine, however, that this surprise will be moderated in a degree, upon recollecting some of the observations that were made in the first Chapter relative to the difference of opinion concerning the nature of a weekly sabbath, among those who profess to keep the first day. It was there shown, that if all those who in theory as well as in practice withhold from the sabbath no small portion of the time and of the religious exercises—particularly those of a domestic, private, or mental nature, which, according to the sentiments of the pious in general, (in the British dominions at least, whether Churchmen or Dissenters,) are its due, were excepted from the number of those who are said to sanctify the first day, the ranks of those who account it to be

the weekly sabbath would be materially thinned. But it will be better for me not to notice, at present, the opinions of many among the professed observers of the first day themselves on its right to consecration, together with the extent and mode of sanctification to which that right entitles, or is thought to entitle it. I shall, therefore, consider none except the Sabbatarians as denying its scriptural authority: a denial which can excite no wonder, after what has been stated concerning their denying the repeal of the seventh day sabbath, and their reasons for so doing.

Before I enter upon the subject I wish to observe, that the non-repeal of the seventh day sabbath would not be disproved by the proof of the first day's claim to sanctification, were it ever so satisfactory. It would only follow that there were two weekly sabbaths; and the improbability of this no more weakens the argument for the non-repeal, than it does that for the new institution.

That there is no formal appointment of the first day for a weekly sabbath by Christ or his apostles, is, I believe, almost universally admitted. But it is insisted that the want of direct evidence in support of its divine authority (were it wholly wanting) is amply supplied by circumstantial evidence. I am not unwilling to examine the nature, extent, and force, of the evi-

dence referred to. But before I do so, I cannot but express my doubts beforehand, whether any thing short of direct evidence will suffice in a case of this nature. In my opinion, no events happening on a certain day, however supernatural or beneficial, can render or prove that day sacred, without a divine command to that effect. They only render the day of the month, and its annual return, perhaps, remarkable. Neither would the performance of religious acts on it, though the most solemn, convert it into a sacred day, without the notice aforesaid. The acts themselves are indeed suitable to a sabbath, but by no means prove that the day in question is one, since they may be and often are performed on a common day—most of them, perhaps, weekly. The persons, too, who performed or enjoined them on the day, though inspired, do not make or prove the day a sabbath, except they tell us that they did it on that account: for they might have done the same for reasons that were merely personal, local, or temporary; and the acts themselves are no more than others have or might have done, though uninspired. In fine, a day attended with all the circumstances that have been mentioned, could have no right to an appellation given by Scripture to a day, without naming it, and apparently implying a sacred character, when there was another day to claim

it, which Scripture never stated otherwise than as sacred—especially as the title itself was not altogether free from ambiguity.

I know that the seventh day was appointed at the close of the Creation to be a weekly sabbath, because God is expressly said to have ‘sanctified’ it—that is, set it apart for holy purposes. But without this declaration, neither God’s resting on it after his great and good work, nor any religious act recorded to have been performed on it, even weekly, by the Patriarchs, could have proved that they acted in obedience to the divine authority, and much less that others were obliged to do so, because they did. The case of sacrifices shall be considered presently.

I must observe, further, that were it possible to prove the divine institution of a sabbath without direct evidence, the want of that evidence in such a case would be an unique. There is no divine institution among all the institutions upon sacred record, before or since the flood, under the Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian dispensation, like that of the first day sabbath, if it be one. The case of sacrifices is not similar to it. Abraham, Jacob, and Job, were ordered by the Divine Being to offer sacrifices. [See Genesis, chapters 15, 22, and 35. and Job, ch. 42.] The divine institution of sacrifices among the Jews is manifest. As to the Patriarchs before the time of Abraham,

and the Gentiles who were cotemporary with them, a divine institution, if not imparted by the blessed God immediately to themselves, could be known to them only through the medium of traditionary revelation ; there being then no written revelation. The apostles are never said in the New Testament to have received a divine order for consecrating the first day, (the contingent and temporary act of pious benevolence, enjoined on certain churches to be performed privately on that day, is not an order for consecrating the day,) and there is no necessity for trusting to tradition on the subject, since written revelation was then in existence. In each of these respects the case of the first day is totally dissimilar to that of sacrifices. It does not follow that the ancients before the time of Abraham sacrificed without the divine authority, from our not being informed of it, when it does not concern us to know. But it does concern us to know the ground of the first day's claim.

The observers of the first day, however, do not admit universally the want of direct evidence to prove its divine claim to be the weekly sabbath. Some have considered Hebrews 4. 10. in the light of a divine precept for its weekly sanctification. But the word in the preceding verse which is translated *rest*, though it signifies keeping a sabbath, does not mean keeping one on earth, but

keeping one in heaven. It '*remaineth* for the people of God;' it is not now possessed by them, as it would be were the weekly sabbath intended: and they 'enter into it' now, only because they shall as certainly have it, as if they had it already, and because grace is the evidence, the beginner, and the foretaste, of glory. The pronoun *he*, who is said to have 'entered into his rest as God did into his,' is not the substitute for Christ, whose name had never been mentioned, but for *people* in the preceding verse, which in the original is in the singular number, as well as masculine, who, whether taken individually or collectively, when they have entered into their rest, will as certainly have 'ceased from their work,' or, as the apostle John has it, 'rest from their labour,' 'as God did from his.' This is true in point of fact; and as to the honour of being thus compared to God appearing to a learned and pious writer (Dr. Owen) to be infinitely too great for a common saint, and an objection being made to the foregoing comment on that account, it is no more than what is done in other passages of Scripture, in which the apostles are represented as 'working together with him,' that is, with God, and in which the Philippians are commanded to 'work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,' it being God that 'worked in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'



In short, the inspired writer to the Hebrews having had occasion to quote Gen. 2. 2, 3. in order to explain a verse in Psalm 95., takes advantage of the quotation to give a new illustration of the happiness which every true believer has in prospect. In this he does no more than what is common with the sacred writers. There is not the least appearance, through the whole of the passage, of his at all having the first day in contemplation, or of his intending to transfer the weekly sabbath to it. Both the beginning and the termination of the argument contained in the first and eleventh verses show that his sole object was to enforce on the minds of the Hebrew Christians the necessity that there was for perseverance in their holy profession, in order to final success.\*

I proceed now to the consideration of the indirect evidence by which the divine claim of the first day to sanctification is attempted to be supported. It is pleaded for this purpose, that certain miraculous and beneficial events took place on this day—such as our Lord's resurrection—his repeated appearance to his disciples—his bless-

\* In point of fact, our Lord, having 'ceased from the work' of redemption, did not enter into his rest on Sunday, but either on Friday, according to his words to the converted malefactor, or on Thursday, when he 'ascended on high.'

ing them—and his sending down the Holy Ghost. Now taking all this for granted, do these occurrences themselves render the day on which they happened the weekly sabbath, or prove it to be such?—Great and beneficial as they certainly were, I confess I can see nothing in them to warrant such an inference, in the absence of a divine declaration to that effect. Many supernatural and happy events took place among the Jews; and on occasion of some of them, particularly that of the Passover, certain days were kept sacred, and called *sabbaths*: but none of them was thus distinguished without a divine command peremptorily given for that purpose; neither did any of them supersede the weekly sabbath, or transfer the sanctification of it to a different day. But it has been said, that though the events under consideration have not the sanction spoken of for consecrating the first day, yet they ought to be regarded as signs that the day was intended by Christ henceforth to be the weekly sabbath, in the same manner as soldiers fight upon their general's giving the signal for battle, without his actually telling them to do so. It should be recollected, however, that the soldiers would not act thus, if they did not know from the general custom of war, or from a particular communication made to them in the course of their training, that they were to understand the sign in this

sense. Whether the expression 'Lord's day' (Rev. 1. 10.) is thus to be considered in the case before us, shall be examined in the proper place. I wish only to observe, at present, that without such a communication from Inspiration, the events themselves neither imply nor prove such a design on the part of Christ.

No doubt remarkable events, especially if they are of a mournful or joyous nature, will for a certain period occur to the recollection of the individuals, families, or nations, interested in them, with the weekly and annual returns of the days on which they happened. On these occasions, the parties will remember with suitable emotions the particulars of them, converse at length about them with all who are concerned in them like themselves, and, if pious characters, 'make peculiar mention of them in their prayers.' But the weekly remembrance will soon wear away, and the annual one will probably not extend beyond the second or third generation, even should children not wholly lose the impressions of remarkable occurrences in the history of their parents, so feelingly and frequently related to them. A body of people, or a nation, deeply interested in some events, may recollect them at a stated time for centuries: but the remembrance is always annual, not weekly; it relates to the day of the month, not the day of the

week ; and in these, as also in the former cases, the subject occupies the thoughts, the conversation, and the conduct, only a part or parts, and not the whole of the day. The religious days of human appointment sometimes,\* though seldom, recur weekly : but though regard is then paid to the day of the week, and not to the day of the month, as when they are annual, (Easter Sunday excepted,) yet they are not kept sacred for twenty-four hours together, unless nominally, and by means, perhaps, of abstinence from particular kinds of food and labour.

The apostles, as men, could not be wholly strangers to those recollections, or to the making those remarks among their connexions, which are common to all mankind during a certain period at least, on the return of days on which singular and interesting events happened—especially since the events which happened to them were supernatural, and of everlasting and universal concern. But how often their impressions recurred, and how they manifested them, cannot be known from the events themselves. Great

\* Among the Roman Catholics, it is well known that Friday is observed as a fast-day ; and it appears from the ‘*Magdeburg Centuries*,’ and from Lucius’s ‘*Ecclesiastical History*,’ that the Greek and Latin Churches observed the seventh day, the former as a festival, and the latter as a fast.

and interesting as the events were, the apostles were less likely to be struck by the return of the days on which they took place than we should be under present circumstances, because they were used to such occurrences, were themselves frequently the instruments of producing extraordinary and beneficial events, and were in the daily habit of studying, propagating, and improving, those which are now the subject of discussion. Be this as it may, so far as can be judged from common experience and observation, there is not the least reason to think that any one of these events would lead the apostles to keep or institute a new weekly sabbath without a divine command for that purpose, or that we ought to understand them as having done so, in the absence of information from their writings.\*

\* The meeting at Troas (Acts 20. 7.) at most only resembles a religious festival of human appointment, in which only a part of the day is kept. The meeting, however, is not said to have taken place on that day, as the weekly return of the day on which Christ rose. There is nothing said about the resurrection, nor any extraordinary joy or thanksgiving on account of that event, as might have been expected, it being the first meeting of the kind that is noticed. Nothing more is said to have taken place at it, than what is stated (Acts 2. 46.) to have taken place every day. No repetition of it is ever mentioned.

Were it true that any day on which a great and good event happened ought to be kept as a weekly sabbath by the apostles and by succeeding Christians without a divine communication, provided the day could be ascertained, more days than the first day would be entitled to that honour. It is known that our Lord suffered on a Friday, and that he ascended on a Thursday. His crucifixion, though a mournful event, was no less necessary, beneficial, and extraordinary, than his resurrection; and his ascension was an event which, beside being no less joyous, was more publicly triumphant, and completed his glory. Yet what Christian now pretends that the apostles kept, or that he himself is obliged to keep, either of them weekly, like the ancient weekly sabbath?\*

But it will perhaps be said, that not only one, but more than one, great and good event happened on the first day, as also that the meeting of Christ with his disciples occurred repeatedly on this day; and that on these accounts it merited the high distinction of sacred

\* Friday and Thursday, though not necessary to be named, as the first day was, to show the accomplishment of a prediction, yet had religious acts as solemn performed on them, as the first day had; and no less publicly and frequently.—See Acts 2. 46.



regard much more than the others. Could both these particulars be proved, I can see nothing more in such a coincidence and repetition, in the absence of a divine injunction, than the same tendency to procure for the return of the day the recollections and notices annually rather than weekly, for a certain period, which I have already mentioned.\* Without such an injunction, there is nothing at all in them to suggest to the mind of an apostle, or of any one else, the idea that the day distinguished by them was henceforth to be sanctified—and that wholly and weekly. With respect to increased tendency to procure regard for the day, the coincidence and repetition in question could avail nothing: for though the days on which the incidents respectively happened went by the same name, they did not happen on the same day, and therefore could not reasonably be commemorated on the same day of the

\* The Fathers describing the first day as a festival, not as a sabbath—the canons and decrees coupling it with the saints' days—and the partial manner in which it was generally if not universally observed before the time of the Puritans, exactly correspond with the ideas that have been thrown out concerning recollections and celebrations merely human. The keeping it annually rather than weekly is indeed extraordinary, but not unparalleled, since, as before observed, the Roman Catholics keep Friday in this manner.

week, but annually on the days of the months on which they severally took place.

But I must now observe, that neither the repetition nor the coincidence is so extraordinary or so incontrovertible as is commonly imagined. No one thinks, I believe, that the disciples met together on the evening of the day on which Christ rose, as supposing the day to have become the weekly sabbath, on account of that event. Considering that it was still uncertain whether an event so extremely interesting to them had taken place, or would take place, it would have been strange if they had let the day on which they had understood that it was to happen, pass without meeting on one part of it or on another. As to our Lord's visiting and blessing them on that occasion, nothing was more likely than that a person of his benignity would take the earliest opportunity of calming their solicitude, and of converting the extraordinary sorrow they had lately experienced into as extraordinary joy, by giving them peculiar marks of his favour, and opening the most noble and exhilarating prospects to their view. No one can justly imagine that incidents so natural, however singular and beneficial, either render the day sacred, or prove an intention on the part of Christ to sanctify the weekly return of it, in the absence of all information to that effect.

If it is asked, in reply, If there was no such intention, how happened it that a second meeting took place on the following first day? I answer by asking, in my turn, Is it so uncommon, then, when a meeting separates, to adjourn to that day week? To infer any intention to attach future sacredness to the day from that circumstance, is, in my opinion, begging the question.\* This would be true, were it absolutely certain that the disciples who met eight days after the first meeting, met on the Sunday following. Notwith-

\* Whatever day the expression (John 20. 26.) ‘after eight days’ refers to, however the disciples came to fix on it, or whatever the object of the meeting was, it does not appear that they met by the order of Christ, that he promised to be with them, or that they expected him. To satisfy and improve the doubts of Thomas concerning the reality of the resurrection seems to have been our Lord’s sole object in coming. Nothing can be inferred concerning the sacred character of the day itself, from the meeting being held on it, because there had been a meeting between that which took place on the day Christ rose, and that which was held ‘eight days after;’ at which intermediate meeting Thomas, who was not present at the former one, expressed to his fellow disciples the doubts before mentioned. In short, circumstanced as the disciples were, it might be expected that they would meet on more days than one in a week; and why should it be thought extraordinary that two of these meetings fell on the same day of different weeks, (supposing it to be a fact that they did so,) rather than on different days?

standing, however, the ingenuity and learning of Dr. Wallis, and even the solidity, in some degree, of his reasoning in defence of this interpretation, I cannot admit that it is conclusive. It would not have been known that our Lord was circumcised on the 'eighth day,' and not till 'eight days' were literally accomplished, if the sacred writer had not told us so. The 'three days and the three nights' during which our Lord was to 'be in the heart of the earth,' turned out to be only parts of three days; but prophecy seldom possesses the accuracy of history: and though the Jews requested Pilate to 'make the sepulchre' in which the body of Christ lay 'sure' only till the third day, it could not be known beforehand that he would rise at the beginning of the third day; and it would have been imprudent, considering their object, to remove the guard prior to the complete termination of the three days. There is no evidence that the phrase 'after eight days' would have been exchanged for another, if whole days of twenty-four hours each had been incontrovertibly intended, or that this was not the real meaning of the words in question. It does not follow that the Jews understood certain expressions in a way different from their literal sense, because the Romans did, or that with the French they would say 'eight days,' when they meant what the English call 'this day se'nnight.'

When the evidence of a fact is merely circumstantial, as is the case of the first day's right by divine appointment to be the weekly sabbath, no circumstance that is at all ambiguous can be admitted.

It is not certain, therefore, that our Lord met with his disciples on the first day more than once. But even twice or thrice would bear but a small proportion to the number of times he must have been seen on other days, in the course of the forty during which he was with them after his resurrection.

Neither was his blessing them confined to his meeting with them on the first day; for he blessed them also on the fifth day of the week—on a Thursday, the day of his ascension.

In fine, confidently as it has been affirmed that the day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles, was Sunday, the same day of the week on which our Lord rose, I cannot say that this is my opinion, any more than that it is the opinion of many others. The fiftieth day from the day of the resurrection, including that day, would fall on a Sunday: but the day of Pentecost in question, was the day which the Jews called by that name; and that being the fiftieth day after the first day of unleavened bread, the feast kept on account of the Passover must have fallen, the year our Saviour

was crucified, on the sixth or the seventh day of the week.

The result is, that the repetition and coincidence of great and happy events on the first day are not proved, and that that day was no more remarkable for them than certain other days were. Christ died for our sins on a Friday; and though he blessed his disciples as well as rose from the dead on a Sunday, yet he also blessed them on a Thursday, and on the same day 'ascended on high, led captivity captive, received gifts for men, spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly.' There is no more tendency in the resurrection to constitute Sunday a weekly sabbath, or to prove it to be one, than there is in the crucifixion or in the ascension to make or prove the days on which they respectively happened, weekly sabbaths. No doubt an intimation from a sacred writer that this was the will of God would amply supply the want of tendency with respect to either of these days. Whether or no any intimation of this kind occurs in other parts of the New Testament, will be considered afterwards. There is nothing of that nature in the passages that have been already examined.

The next circumstance urged in favour of the divine authority of the first day, is Acts 20. 7. The apostle Paul, with his companions, spent, it



seems, seven days at Troas. What they did on the six former days, including the seventh day of the week, is not stated. But if not passed wholly in missionary labours, of which there is no mention at all, they must have passed in religious meetings and acts among the Christians themselves, in which it is incredible that the Lord's Supper should not have been observed more than once, considering Acts 2. 46. It appears, however, that 'on the first day of the week,' (the last day of the seven,) 'when the disciples came together' [the disciples being assembled together] 'to break bread, Paul preached to them.'\* It is not said whether this 'breaking bread' was a common meal which they had together as friends, the apostle being about to take his leave of them, or whether it was the Lord's Supper; whether the meeting was incidental,† or stated; whether they had a sermon

\* On the days kept as the weekly sabbaths, when it is proposed to annex the Lord's Supper to the other branches of public worship, it is not usual to state the celebration of that ordinance as the object of the meeting, as if it was the sole or at least the grand one.

† The disciples are not said to have come together *as usual*, though there is no mention of such a meeting having taken place before. In Acts 17. 1, 2. we are informed that Paul went into a synagogue of the Jews, *as his manner was*; though it might have been presumed that he did so without such information.

only because the apostle was there to preach it, or whether they would have had one, if he had not been there. Allowing, however, for the present, these questions to be determined in the way most favourable to the title of the first day, I can admit nothing more than that every thing done on this occasion was perfectly consistent with such a title, (supposing the title to have been already proved,) and that Christians are fully at liberty, if they please, to meet and to perform similar acts on the same day of the week. But the facts themselves will by no means prove that it is their duty to do so on it, or the title in question. Acts of public worship are lawful on any day; and they are too commonly and even statedly performed on week days to warrant or even to give rise to any one's thinking that those days are sacred, much less that they are weekly sabbaths—even in the view of the persons engaged in them. If the acts under consideration had been done on the fifth day (the day of the ascension) instead of the first day, I imagine that no one would have thought that the acts themselves conferred a sacred character on the day—that the performance took place in consequence of the day's bearing this character—or that the performance proved that it was intended to bear this character, in the absence of all information to this effect.

It is true, to celebrate the Lord's Supper on a day different from that which is thought by the administrator and communicants to be the weekly sabbath is not common in modern times; but there are instances of it in our time, nor did our Lord or his apostles confine the celebration to the sabbath. There was, in short, nothing more done by the disciples and the apostle Paul at Troas, than was done by the disciples at Jerusalem every day, including the seventh day. [See Acts 2. 46.] Some, however, have thought that the sacred historian would not have named the day when this meeting was held, had he not meant to convey the idea that it took place on the weekly sabbath. 'Why,' say they, 'did he not express it, 'And on the last of these days,' if he had not this intention?'—Whatever this intention was, (if he had any in particular,) it could not be that which has been attributed to him; for if it had, he would have written to this effect—'And on the first day of the week, being now the weekly sabbath,' &c.; there having been no notice of such a change before.\* Had

\* Though the apostles Paul and Barnabas staid a whole year at Antioch in Syria, [Acts 11.] and seven days at Tyre, [Acts 21.] there is no mention of any religious meeting or act, whether private or public, among the Christians, on the first day—much less is there any intimation that this day

the sacred writer expressed himself 'on the last of these days,' instead of 'on the first day,' one of the clauses following, namely, 'ready to depart on the morrow,' would have been superfluous.

I do not see why it should be thought more necessary to account for the historian Luke's telling us the day of the week on which the meeting at Troas was held, than for his telling us the number of days during which the apostle staid there. He assigns no reason for the latter

was now to be the weekly sabbath. This is the more remarkable, as the change, if it took place at all, must have been very recent when the apostles were at Antioch; and the circumstance of the Christians' having been first called by that name at that place, furnished the fairest opportunity for noticing the new sabbath, which had never yet been noticed. The absence of extraordinary events, indeed, at the meetings, whether at Antioch or at Tyre, might in itself occasion the silence of the sacred writer concerning the first day, as well as concerning the seventh day. But though there was no necessity for noticing the observance of an institution known to have been long established, which there was no ground for thinking would be repealed, and the repeal of which had never been stated, (without such a statement, however, there was no reason to suppose that it had taken place,) when nothing occurred at it but what was ordinary, yet there was such a necessity in the case of a new institution, (provided there was one,) which still remained to be mentioned for the first time,

any more than for the former. Had it been of any consequence for us to know, he would no doubt have told us. But the defect in the narrative ought not to be supplied by a conjecture that begs the question at issue.\*

For these reasons, I cannot consider the meeting at Troas, held once during a part of the first day,† the object proposed, the transactions at it, or the persons concerned in them, separately or conjointly, as constituting the first day a weekly sabbath, or proving it to be one. To justify such an idea, it is requisite that the sacred writer should intimate that the incident took place either in consequence of the day's being the weekly sabbath, or to show that it was intended to be so considered in future. Otherwise, how could this be possibly known, since, as I have shown, nothing either said or done prior to this

\* Had the narrative in Acts 20. 7, &c. followed that in Acts 2. 46. no one could have attached importance to the mention of the first day:—why should any be attached to it now?

† There is no information how the disciples at Troas, and the apostle, spent the rest of that day: much less is there any account how the Christians in other places spent any part of it, or how any of them employed either the preceding or subsequent Sundays. Yet such information is absolutely necessary in a case where a new sabbath is to be proved by apostolic example.

affair conveys any such idea; and there is nothing in the affair itself that authorizes any such conclusion.\* It does not follow, therefore, from what the disciples and the apostle did on that day, that every Christian is obliged to do the same: it only follows that it is lawful for him to do so—a discovery which he might have made without the assistance of revelation. The observations that have been made would have been true, had the meeting and transactions, or at least religion, occupied the whole day, and weekly; but there is no evidence that they occupied more than some hours of the day, or that they ever took place more than this single time.

The justice of the observations respecting this celebrated passage receives confirmation from the fact, that we should have known nothing of

\* Let it not be asked, If the disciples and the apostle did not keep the first day, what day did they keep? An answer has been already returned to this question, in the last Chapter. Were it even proved that the seventh day sabbath was repealed, and that they did not keep that, it would not follow that they kept another day. That one day in seven must be kept is no otherwise a Scriptural doctrine, than as the day was named by the Blessed God. If that day is repealed, the obligation to keep any day ceases with it, except there be another institution. That the first day was instituted at the time when the meeting at Troas took place, is the point to be proved.



the meeting on the first day, nor of what passed at it, had it not been for the miracle relative to Eutychus. The narrative is given, not on account of the meeting, and the religious transactions at it, but for the sake of communicating the supernatural event. It is incredible that this would have been done, had it been the design of Luke to show by this meeting, and the religious acts performed at it, that the first day was now the weekly sabbath. Since nothing was either said or done, as recorded in the sacred writings, before, to convey the idea—an idea, too, so very important, it might be expected that he would have told us of the meeting and transactions taking place on some other first day, when no such miracle was performed; and instead of the miracle, have informed us of the meeting and transactions having taken place in consequence of the new institution by divine authority. A fact may indeed sometimes be told indirectly and incidentally, and the evidence of its truth be the stronger on that account; but no wise, equitable, and benevolent legislator would abandon his subjects to chance for the discovery of any law of his, the neglect of which might subject them to severe penalties. Least of all ought it to be thought that the Divine Legislator would do so; nor is there an instance of it to be found in any other part of the Scriptures, or even here. The

facts thus indirectly communicated to us are, that the disciples did once meet together on the first day, for the purpose of 'breaking bread,' and that Paul preached to them. This information would be important, if any doubt existed that these acts were lawful on a Sunday as well as on other days. But the point at issue is, not whether Christians *may*, but whether they *must* perform and attend public worship on Sunday—on every Sunday—and devote the whole day to religion in one way or in another. Of these new and important facts, there is no information in the text indirectly and incidentally, any more than directly and purposely.

The next passage produced as indirect evidence of the first day's claim to be the weekly sabbath by divine authority, occurs 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. In this text, the apostle Paul gives commandment to the Christians composing the church at Corinth, as he had done before to those that composed the churches of Galatia, for 'every one on the first day of the week to lay by him in store, as God had prospered him,' for the benefit of the poor saints, 'that there be no gatherings,' adds the apostle, 'when I come.' The act here commanded to be done on the first day was no doubt an act of piety, as well as of benevolence. But the evidence afforded by this text of the fact which it is brought to prove is of no

weight, on nearly the same accounts as that supposed to be afforded by the last text was. An act of pious charity is as proper for a week-day as for a sabbath, and I believe as frequently performed on the one as on the other. It might be performed only one Sunday; at any rate, it could not be repeated more than a limited number of weeks. It was enjoined only on some churches, not on all. The order through which we become acquainted with the act, and the day when it was to take place, would not have been given, had it not been for the incidental poverty of the saints. Above all, there is no intimation that the first day was appointed for the purpose on account of its being now the weekly sabbath, or intended to be proved such by this injunction, though no intimation of the institution had been ever thrown out before.\*

Here it will be asked, What could be the reason of thus performing and enjoining religious acts on this day, and on no other, if not to intimate the institution in question? Why should they take place repeatedly on it?—I answer, that

\* There is the same want of information here, concerning a variety of particulars, most important in proving the existence of a new sabbath by apostolic example, and the practice of the first Christians, which was stated relative to the meeting at Troas.—*See Note, p. 175.*

it has already been made to appear, from Acts 2. 46., that religious acts were by no means confined by Christians among themselves to the first day, not even that act which is usually held to be the most solemn one. The repetition, spoken of as so remarkable, is the smallest possible; and the pious act to be performed by the believing Galatians and Corinthians, is very different from those acts which were performed at Troas, and least of all calculated to suggest the idea that the day on which it was to be performed was the sabbath. As to the day selected by the apostle for this act of pious benevolence being the same with that on which the meeting at Troas is stated to have been held, I may ask, in my turn, Could not such a coincidence exist, without its arising from the day's being the weekly sabbath? Are there no instances in which religious acts are now performed, and ordered to be performed, on the same day in different weeks, and for a series of weeks, too, though the day be not the sabbath, nor thought by any one to suggest the idea of a sabbath? If this happens frequently in modern times, why might it not happen for *once* in the time of the apostles? There is nothing singular in the religious acts which took place on the first day in different weeks, except the celebration of the Lord's Supper, if 'breaking bread' means that, on one of them, which, though not common

on a week-day in this age, might be very common in the first age of Christianity. In Jerusalem, the act took place every day. (See Acts 2. 46.) In short, since the apostle has not assigned his reason for selecting the same day of the week on which he preached at Troas, for the act of pious benevolence under discussion, conjecture, as I said in another case, cannot be allowed to supply the defect, by begging the question at issue.

I cannot, however, quit the coincidence that has been noticed without remarking, that far from wondering at such a coincidence happening for once, we ought rather to wonder (it seems to me) that the coincidence did not happen often. The first day was the only day, I believe, at that time, except the seventh day, that had its appropriate name. This distinction it probably obtained in order to enable the apostles and their disciples to name the day on which our Lord rose (a day which they had frequent occasion to mention) without circumlocution, as was always done in speaking of any other week-day, and of this, too, prior to the great and happy event that took place on it. The first day, therefore was a fitter day to be appointed for the performance of any act, especially when it was to be performed by numbers, and these, too, situated in different countries, at the same time, than any other, because

in the circular issued to give notice of the design, the day would be designated more concisely, and with less liableness to occasion neglect of the act through uncertainty of the time.\* This being the case, when we consider the multitude of occasions which the Christians, as well as other bodies of people, probably had for fixing and giving notice of certain days for private and public purposes, it is more surprising that the first day is not mentioned often, than that it should be noticed twice in the history of the apostles.

It may now be asked, Why did not the apostle appoint the seventh day for the act, since that had an appropriate name, as well as the other?—I reply, that as the act was to be founded upon ascertaining the earnings of the preceding week, it is evident that the apostle could only choose the end of that week after labour was completed, or the beginning of the next before

\* The apostle's sole object in appointing a day for this private act seems to have been to secure a contribution *weekly*. Were that done, it made no difference to him on which day of the week it took place. He only named a day, lest by leaving it to be done any day, it should not be done at all. The weekly contributions, too, would probably secure an amount more considerable than if they had been appointed to be monthly.



it was resumed. But before I proceed further, it will be necessary to consider the nature of the act more fully, as also the circumstance that must have preceded it.

The act of pious benevolence under discussion was merely a private one. Every one was to 'lay by him in store as God had prospered him.' It is not said that individuals were to carry their respective sums to a particular place in order to their being deposited in a common receptacle, as is done in our time when public collections are made in places of worship; nor is there occasion for such a supposition. It is not even hinted that there was any place of worship open for them to carry the money to; and it does not follow, from the disciples at Troas having met *once* on the first day, that those at other places met on *every* first day, or even on one. The 'gatherings' which the apostle wished to prevent 'when he came' need not to be understood of those which are made by going 'from house to house,' (a practice to which the apostle was accustomed,) but of public gatherings which are attended with great anxiety on the part of those who are to procure them, and are often even deficient in their amount through the non-attendance of those that should contribute, or their ignorance that each ought to do what he can, and no more—whether there are or are not more

collections than one for the same object. There is, therefore, no ground for supposing more than the text states, namely, private acts by each member of the church separately at his own residence, or in his own apartment. That the apostolic command for these separate acts, which related only to some churches, and which, however excellent in their nature and design, would themselves occupy only a few moments,\* and which would be repeated but for a limited number of weeks at furthest, should be intended to constitute or prove the day appointed for their performance to be the weekly sabbath, when no such idea had ever been thrown out before, seems to me utterly incredible. Nor will its unsuitableness be removed, by connecting it with the former arguments; for each of them, upon examination, has been found equally irrelevant.

But the circumstance most unfavourable to the supposition just mentioned, namely, the process that must have preceded it—the estimate to be taken of the earnings of the preceding week, together with the calls, both certain and contingent, to be made upon them by private, domestic, and other exigences—an estimate which, in

\* Not the smallest hint is given that the rest of the day was to be employed in private or public acts of devotion.

the case of wealthy men of business, such as many of the believing Corinthians no doubt were, and such as were fittest for the apostle's purpose, might be long and complex. A secular process like this, notwithstanding its object and issue, does not seem very proper for a sabbath. It has been said, indeed, that the process might have taken place the preceding day, and only the 'laying by in store' be practised on the first day; but the words of the text intimate no such distinction of times for the two acts: it was most natural for the individual to go and lay the money by the moment he had made up his mind how much it should be, and the apostle gives him no caution against acting in this manner.

To return to the question, why the apostle should appoint the first day rather than the seventh. Whatever his reason was, he does not appear to have given the first day the preference on account of his thinking that the act he was enjoining—especially when taken in connexion with what it was natural should immediately precede it, and which the text affords us no ground for supposing did not immediately precede it, was more fit for a sacred than for a secular day; much less that it was fit for the former exclusively. Of course the invalidity of the indirect evidence hitherto adduced in favour of

the first day's right to sanctification still continues. The text just dismissed is even more remote from affording matter to the purpose than the preceding one.

The only part of the indirect evidence adduced in support of the first day sabbath that remains to be considered, is the expression 'Lord's day,' Rev. 1. 10. It is commonly understood to mean the first day, and that the new name was given to it in honour of Christ, who rose from the dead on it; whence it is inferred that the weekly Sunday is sacred to him, and has become the weekly sabbath.

The expression, no doubt, has an appearance that commands respect and reverence. It seems likewise to imply something of considerable importance. But as it is new, and occurs nowhere else in Scripture, the sense just stated to be usually given to it ought not to be acquiesced in without examination. There is nothing said in the context which throws the least light upon its meaning, and therefore, in order to explain it, recourse must be had to the other writings of the apostle John, or to those of his inspired brethren.

The phrase seems to indicate a day that is peculiarly the Lord's, and which ought to be wholly devoted to him. This sense of it, however, is not absolutely necessary, as will be noticed here-

after; but let it be admitted for the present. What day, then, do the other parts of Scripture—particularly the New Testament, represent as sacred? I know of no other to which the phrase can be applied, except the seventh day sabbath—especially if the day called ‘Lord’s day’ occurred weekly, as is commonly supposed. For though part of each of the other days appears to have been sometimes occupied in religious exercises, (publicly, too, and ‘breaking bread’ not excluded,) and several hours once of the first day, these religious acts, even if they occurred weekly, (of which there is no proof,) do not fill a single day; and it is a sacred *day*, not sacred *hours*, or a sacred *part* of a day, that is here sought after.\*

I know that it has been said that the Christians in the first age or ages could not meet at any other time of the day than in the evening after dark, or very early in the morning, through dread of their persecutors. This fear, however, is never assigned in the New Testament as a reason for a nocturnal meeting of Christians, except on the day of our Lord’s resurrection, when the

\* Were the religious acts performed on different Sundays to be considered as performed on one and the same Sunday, they would not by any means fill the hours in a day that are usually spent in business or enjoyment,

public feeling was peculiarly hostile to Christ and his followers. The meeting at Troas may as well be supposed to have taken place after dark, because the Christians who attended it were not at leisure till then on account of secular business, as for the other reason.\* No other assemblies of Christians, several of which are noticed by the sacred writers as meeting for religious purposes, if not for public worship, appear to have been at night. But admitting that the fear of persecution prevented them from worshipping publicly on the first day, except after dark, or before sunrise, still this would not obstruct the meeting of small parties in private houses for the worship of God; and as we are not told that they did so meet, or how they spent the rest of the time, there is no proof that they ever devoted the whole of a single first day to religion. That there is no proof of the first day's not having been wholly spent in religion at Troas, for instance, will not warrant the drawing an inference from the unproved supposition of its having been so spent. The notice here called for is indispensably necessary to the proof of its having ever

\* The nocturnal meeting for prayer which Peter came to on his deliverance from prison by the angel was too extraordinary a case to be admitted as evidence of the general custom.



been treated as sacred in a single instance, since it is never said to have been sanctified, as the seventh day was.

If, therefore, the sense of Scripture is to be determined in the same way that the sense of human writings is determined, and the 'Lord's day' be supposed to mean a sacred day, or a day spent in devotional acts, it can mean only the seventh day, there being no other described as sacred through the whole of the New Testament.

I have already assigned my reasons for not allowing that the seventh day sabbath has been repealed, or that there are no religious acts stated to have been performed on it by Christians as Christians, or that the notice of such instances is requisite to the proof of an obligation continuing or to its being regarded, in the case of an institution that is known to have long existed, and been attended to. But were the contrary ever so plain, it would not follow that the Scriptures had ever represented Sunday to be a sacred day, and that therefore it was the only day which could be meant by the expression 'Lord's day.' It would only follow, from the disprovement of the continuance of the seventh day's claim, that no day now known was entitled to the honour.

It is remarkable that our Lord did once attach his sacred title of *Lord* to the seventh day; namely, when he said, 'The Son of man is Lord

also of the sabbath-day.' The phrase 'sabbath-day' must refer to the seventh day; for no one thinks that there was any other sabbath at that time; nor does our Lord distinguish any other day in this manner. There is indeed mention in Psalm 118. 24. of a day 'which the Lord hath made;' but it is as uncertain what day is referred to in that verse, as it is respecting the words under consideration. It must not be inferred, because the verses preceding relate to Christ, that the verse following does the same. The day spoken of may be that of the great and happy event in the history of David which it is the immediate object of the Psalm to celebrate. Or if it be one that occurs in the history of Christ, and not of David, yet the day on which it took place may as well be that of his ascension, [Thursday,] as that of his resurrection. Nor does it follow, from the day on which the event actually happened being distinguished by some special mark of regard, that the weekly return of it is to be distinguished in like manner.\*

\* The sacred writers of the New Testament, in mentioning the first day, never speak of it as a day that God had *particularly* made; nor do they either express, or exhort others to manifest, any *joy* or *gladness* on account of the resurrection, or on any other account. In ecclesiastical history, St. Barnabas, whoever he was, is the first person who says, 'We ce-

The exclusive right, therefore, of the seventh day to be accounted the day referred to in Rev. 1. 10. supposing 'Lord's day' to mean a sacred day, seems to me to be incontrovertible. I may add, that there is nothing evangelical said or done on any other day of the week which may not be said or done on the seventh day—the acts of noticing and improving our Lord's resurrection included. The seventh day, too, is as proper for thinking of the ascension, as the day of the resurrection is. The only objection that can be made to it, namely, that it was never so called before, affects the claim of the first day, and of every other day, as much as it does that of the seventh day. On that very account, however, I do not wish to assert its right to the appellation in question; nor does its claim to sanctification since our Lord's resurrection, as well as before, in my opinion, need any such confirmation. The reasons have been stated.

It is indeed taken for granted that the term 'Lord,' in the disputed passage, refers to Christ, and therefore that the day called *Lord's day* must be a day on which something memorable in his history took place, and be sacred to him on that account. To confirm the truth of these as-

lebrate the eighth day with gladness, on account of our Lord's resurrection'.

sertions, it is urged that the epithet 'Lord's' is the same in the original as the word used in the phrase 'Lord's supper,' which is acknowledged on all hands to be a service appropriated to Christ, and referring peculiarly to him. But it should be considered, on the other hand, that the term 'Lord' is not given to Christ in the New Testament exclusively; and that therefore, for aught that appears, it may in Rev. 1. 10. be as reasonably applied to the Father, or to the Holy Spirit, or to the Divine Being in general, as to the Son. The word in the original might be used with as much propriety in those cases as in this.\* Neither does it follow, that 'Lord's day' is a day devoted to Christ on account of something great and good relative to him happening upon it, from its being expressed by the same word in the original that 'Lord's' is in the expression 'Lord's Supper,' which, no doubt, is owing to him, and peculiarly his. The cases are too widely different by far to justify such an inference. The Lord's Supper was solemnly instituted by Christ. The time at which, and the circumstances under which, he instituted it, are recorded by three of the Evangelists out of the four. The elements,

\* It would not be certain that the term Lord in the phrase Lord's supper meant Christ, were it not for the institution, and the apostolic comment upon it.

the actions, the signification and design of both, the persons who were to be the communicants, and the period during which the ordinance was to continue in force, are all stated. In fine, the apostle Paul comments upon the institution at large, 1 Cor. 11. In none of these important particulars does the 'Lord's day' resemble the 'Lord's Supper.' If we had only the solitary phrase 'Lord's Supper,' I suppose we should treat it merely as a figurative representation of the gospel, with its beneficial effects on earth, and more especially in heaven. We should never think that any new institution was implied, or imagine that the rites which now distinguish it were to be performed. We should justly suppose that if the phrase contained an obligation to any peculiar observance, the obligation could not extend beyond the believers who lived at the time when the phrase was written, as they alone could discover and ascertain its meaning.

The ignorance and uncertainty merely imagined to exist relative to the expression 'Lord's Supper' actually attend us relative to that of 'Lord's day.' The term 'Lord' cannot be ascertained to refer to Christ; and if it could, as also that the day in question was a day memorable in his history for some great and happy event, it could not be known which day was intended, since Thursday and Friday were distinguished by such events,

as well as Sunday. There is no religious act peculiarly relative to Christ stated to have been done on the first day, which is not stated to have been done on every day; nor is any act of religion at all represented as being done on the first day, because it was the first day, or the day of the resurrection—much less that it was filled with religious acts, and intended to be filled with them every weekly return, like a weekly sabbath. It is indeed named twice, when the others are not; but though the reasons I have conjectured for that, and for the preference given to the first day in one of the cases, may not be the true ones, the silence of Scripture is not to be compensated by begging the question at issue.

I have hitherto taken the general supposition for granted, that ‘Lord’s day’ signifies a day sacred during the twenty-four hours. But I must now observe, that could it even be known that the first day was designed by the phrase, still it would be uncertain whether it was not merely to be called henceforth by the name of ‘Lord’s day’ in honour of Christ, (as the Roman months *Quintilis* and *Sextilis* were called *Julius* and *Augustus* in honour of those emperors,) or at most to be further distinguished, during a part of it, by some religious acts peculiarly adapted to celebrate the day, and the glorious incident which took place on it. To nei-



ther of these questions do the Scriptures furnish an answer : for the religious meeting and service at Troas, on *one* Sunday evening, are not stated to have been obligatory, or to have taken place on any such account as that under consideration. Much less are we told that the whole day was to be kept sacred, like a sabbath, and that it was to return weekly. With respect to the last circumstance, so far as can be judged from what history, both sacred and profane, informs us was done in cases most resembling this, the return is annual, not weekly.

I am aware that the term 'Lord' has been thought sufficient to answer all these queries, and that a day which is emphatically 'the Lord's' must in every part be sacred to him, and sacred as often as it returns, which it does every week. Admitting all this, the phrase does not answer the question which day it is. But the case before us is an *unique*, and unparalleled ; and therefore it can only be determined by comparing it with the cases that are most similar to it in human, and more especially in divine writings. In human writings and practice, such an example may denote only a new name given to the day that is accounted memorable ; and though in the absence of information from Scripture I know not why Sunday should be called 'Lord's day,' any more than the day of the crucifixion or the as-

cension, yet if an act of Parliament enjoined it, I as a loyal subject should comply, since the Scriptures leave me at liberty so to do. At most man would require only some part or parts of the day to be devoted to religion, not the whole twenty-four hours—except perhaps so far as relates to abstaining from secular employment, particularly of a public nature. The return, too, would only be annual. With regard to the testimony of the sacred writings on the subject, the Jews had monthly as well as annual sabbaths, on which they held holy convocations, and did no manner of secular work: but sacred as these days were to the Lord, there is no reason to think that the Jews were required to keep them as they were to keep the weekly sabbath, which they were to call a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and on which they were to honour God, not doing their own ways, seeking their own pleasure, or speaking their own words.—See Isaiah 58. 12.

The texts in the New Testament to which alone the phrase ‘Lord’s day’ can be referred for a practical explanation in favour of Sunday, speak of religious acts during one part of the day merely, and for a limited number of weeks at furthest. If, however, a partial observance seems inadequate to the apparent importance of the expression ‘Lord’s day,’ and it be insisted upon that the term *Lord* makes a weekly sab-

bath of the day to which it is applied, solemn as it is in sound, it can be of no use in practice, except the day be ascertained. The seventh day alone answers to it, for which, notwithstanding, I am persuaded it was never meant. If the expression implies only partial observance, and must mean some memorable day in our Lord's history, it cannot indicate a weekly sabbath; and the fifth or sixth day may fairly stand a candidate with the first day for that honour: for though they are not mentioned, even indirectly and incidentally, by name, in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any one of the Epistles, as the first day is twice, (perhaps because they had no names at that time, or no miraculous events took place on them,) yet it appears, from Acts 2. 46. that most solemn acts of public worship took place among Christians upon them, as well as upon the first day.\*

Thus total is our want of means for ascertaining what day the expression refers to,—(if it be not the seventh day, as I do not think it is, since

\* I have already noticed, that the first day was universally kept in this partial manner before the time of the Puritans, and still is kept so throughout the greatest part of Christendom; nor do I know of any public remonstrance against the practice in those parts by any body of pious people on Scriptural, if upon any other grounds.

however sacred it was to God weekly, and that exclusively, and however fit it is to answer any purpose of the Christian dispensation as much as the first day is, it is never called by this name, any more than any other day is so called,)—why it was called so,—what use it was to be applied to, if any,—whether that use was to respect the whole of the day, or only a part of it,—and whether its observance was to be weekly, or annual. I see not, therefore, how it can supply in any degree or way the entire want of evidence which attends its relation to the other passages adduced in favour of the first day's claim by divine authority to be the weekly sabbath. Whatever obligation the words might impose on those who were cotemporaries and companions of the apostle John, and who therefore possessed means of knowing their true sense and proper application, they can impose none on Christians in succeeding ages, who are entirely ignorant of both.

The reverend and learned author Morer, whom I have repeatedly mentioned, in his *Dialogues on the Lord's day*, after enumerating\* the various days to which the expression 'Lord's day' has been applied, candidly acknowledges the utter uncertainty respecting it, of which I have been speaking.

\* Pages 44—46.

After these remarks, my reader will be not a little surprised, I suppose, at my saying that I have no doubt that the phrase in question really does mean the common Sunday, and no other day. But I make the avowal on a ground which, I fear, will greatly shock him, considering the opinion of people in general relative to this subject. In short, I am fully persuaded that the apostle John did not write those words—that they are an interpolation, and that a very late one—perhaps about the time of Constantine the Great. I proceed to give my reasons for holding a sentiment so different from that of Christendom at large.

It seems to me very strange, and contrary to the usual practice of Holy Writ, to employ language seemingly indicative of some important fact or duty, as in the passage before us, at the same time leaving us wholly uncertain, as has been shown, what it is. There are instances in the New Testament of this respecting a motive to duty, but never, so far as I recollect, respecting a duty itself. [See Matth. 18. 10.—1 Cor. 7. 14. and 11. 10.]

Again, if the apostle John had written the expression, and had meant the weekly first day by it, would he not have called it by the new name in his Gospel, which, it is agreed on all hands, he wrote after the Revelation? There was the



more occasion for this, as his fellow apostles and the other evangelists had never done it. Yet in mentioning the day on which Christ rose he calls it the *first day of the week*, as they do, without any explanatory clause, such as, ‘now called *Lord’s day*, and appointed henceforth to be the weekly sabbath, instead of the seventh day.’ This would have been an effectual way to prevent the Asiatic Christians, or any other, from mistaking the day on which Christ rose, and might have been reasonably expected from an inspired writer like John, who so often guards us against misconception by translating Hebrew words into Greek, as in the instances of Cephas and Siloam, which he tells us are, by interpretation, ‘Peter,’ and ‘Sent.’

Further: Morer, a divine of the Establishment, and of course a writer in favour of the first day, informs us, [p. 46.] that ‘the Syriac translation, instead of the *first day*, 1 Cor. 16. 2. saith, *on every Lord’s day*; and where the apostle speaks thus, (chap. 11. 20.) *When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s body*, that version alters or rather adds to it, *You do not eat the Lord’s body, as becomes the Lord’s day.*’

These repeated attempts at alteration or interpolation failed respecting a book, the divine authority of which was never questioned: but is



there not too much reason to think that the attempt was renewed with success in a book which, after having been received into the canon of the New Testament, has, though without just cause, since the third century, been the occasion of much controversy and division in the Christian Church?

The same valuable writer indeed tells us, in the same page, that Beza declares that in an ancient Greek copy of the New Testament he found, after 'the first day of the week,' these words, 'the Lord's day,' as exagetical. But the abruptness of the parenthesis in which the explanatory clause is mentioned, gives it very much the appearance of the copyist having added it to the manuscript he was transcribing, solely by his own authority.

I cannot doubt the fact of the interpolation in Rev. 1. 10. when I consider that St. Ignatius, the most ancient of the Christian Fathers, who urges the Christians in the strongest terms to show particular regard to the first day in honour of Christ's resurrection, though the cotemporary of the apostle John for thirty years, and his disciple, in calling Sunday 'Lord's day,' (if he ever calls it so,) never once pleads the authority and example of his master for this practice. It is perfectly incredible that this celebrated man, whose talents, learning, and piety, were thought

so much of, as to be the means of exalting him to a bishopric in the ecclesiastical sense of the term—this holy martyr—should call the first day ‘Lord’s day,’ and the ‘Queen of days,’ without ever mentioning the words as a quotation from the Revelation, which he must have known to be there, had they been there in his days.\* If he had, after quoting the words, commented upon them, in his master’s name, in the manner usually done, the comment could not have been received or treated as equivalent to Inspiration by any consistent Protestant; but it would at least have tended to promote his design far more than all his eulogies and vehemence. There is no modern writer that agrees with him in his view and aim relative to the first day, who does not quote the passage in Rev. 1. 10., and in whose work, far from being omitted, it does not exhibit a conspicuous and splendid figure.

No writer, except St. Ignatius, even mentions the expression ‘Lord’s day’ till towards the close of the second century: much less quotes it from Rev. 1. 10.: for as to the Epistle of St. Barnabas, and the Ecclesiastical or Apostolical Canons, the last of which works contains the words ‘Lord’s

\* Either St. Ignatius had no occasion to plead as he did, or he had occasion to use a much stronger plea, provided he knew of one.

day,' (though not as quoted from the Revelation,) the first would have formed a part of Revelation, had it been really written by the apostle Barnabas;\* and the latter work is by no means so ancient as the title imports. Justin Martyr calls the first day 'Sunday,' and never intimates that it did or ought to go by another name. He says nothing about the passage in the Revelation, nor produces it in support of the divine authority of that religious regard, which, according to him, was paid by the Christians at Rome to a part at least of the first day. Had the passage existed and been known to him, he would most likely have thought it as much to his purpose to quote it, as to tell us that 'the Sun of righteousness arose on Sunday.' The Fathers and Councils subsequent to that time call the first day 'Lord's day' as well as 'Sunday,' and by its appropriate name, and are as solicitous as St. Ignatius for its observance; but are equally silent with him respecting the words attributed to the apostle John. The most learned advocates among the moderns for the first day, in applying Rev. 1. 10. to that day, never refer to any writer earlier than the fourth century that quotes it; which they would have done, if they could have found any: and

\* Barnabas, according to Mr. Wright, (p. 110,) who has been noticed before, calls it merely the *eighth day*.

therefore I suspect, as I mentioned before, that the interpolation, as I think it is, was made after or about the time of Constantine the Great,\* possibly with a view to support the edicts of that prince in favour of the first day, which take no notice of the religious regard hitherto paid to the seventh day as much as to the first day, in all the Christian Churches, except those of Rome and Alexandria.

Of course, those in the early ages who rejected the divine authority of the Revelation itself, do not cite the passage in question; nor can their silence be produced as an argument against its authenticity. To this number belong many of

\* 'It is very likely,' says Morer, p. 57, 'that the more solemn and public use of the words [Lord's day] was not observed till about the time of Sylvester II, when, by Constantine's command, it became an injunction. It was afterwards more generally noted in conversation and writing, religious and civil. Till the time of that emperor and that prelate, it had never commenced an Ecclesiastical Constitution. This agrees with the notion of the present Church, looking on it as a very decent and laudable custom, yet still a custom, continued from universal tradition, and not a divine ordinance. Isidore and Hesychius call it an apostolic tradition, and an instance of the authority of the Church.' This custom would have been general, and even sole, from the beginning, had the phrase Rev. 1. 10., together with the sense now affixed to it, been known and received.

the Greek Churches, Gregory Nazianzen, and the Council of Laodicea, held about A. D. 364; [Morer, *p.* 47.] the two last leaving it out of their catalogues of canonical books of the New Testament. But it at least follows, that whatever reason *they* all had for calling Sunday 'Lord's day,' and for consecrating any part of it, the authority of the apostle John was not that reason. Whether the Christian world at present would think the New Testament afforded sufficient ground for styling the first day 'Lord's day' with a view to its sanctification, were the passage in the Revelation wanted, I am wholly ignorant.

Perhaps it will be asked, How came the ancients by the phrase 'Lord's day,' if they did not get it from Rev. 1. 10.?—And may it not be a quotation, though the book, the chapter, and the verse, whence it was taken, be not mentioned?—I answer, that when people are disposed to distinguish a day in a particular manner on account of some remarkable person or event, they are not at a loss for an appropriate name, as the Popish Calendar abundantly proves. *Lord's day*, or *Christ's day*, (which some have preferred,) seems a very natural appellation for the ancients and their successors to select for the first day in the case supposed. With respect to quoting without naming the authority, the moderns do it



because they have a sign for a quotation : but the ancients had none ; and therefore whenever they wished to be understood to quote, it was absolutely necessary that they should at least mention their author. This was the more indispensable in the situation of those who wished to impose a new obligation on the Christians, since the quotation, together with the comment upon it already stated, tended to add considerable weight to the exhortation. Their neglect, particularly that of St. Ignatius, proves that it was out of their power to do either, and that the name and application, by whomsoever introduced, were merely of human invention.

The manuscripts to which we have access are not older than about the sixth century. Their containing the passage in question, therefore, by no means convinces me that the apostle John wrote it.

Such are the grounds on which I do not consider the words ‘on the Lord’s day,’ Rev. 1. 10. as authentic, or as following the phrase ‘I was in the Spirit’ in that verse, any more than it does the same phrase, chap. 4. 2. But were it ever so certain that the apostle John did write them, I have already shown that they can be of no use or importance to any except those who had access to him or to some other inspired person ; since



without this, there are no means of ascertaining their true sense and proper application.

Were all the pious acts recorded to have been done or ordered to be done on different first days transferred to one and the same first day, they would not sanctify that one day to an extent sufficient to entitle it to the appellation of 'Lord's day,' supposing the phrase to mean a day wholly sacred.

Thus have I gone through the whole of the *indirect* evidence offered in support of the first day's Scriptural claim to be the weekly sabbath. I shall now give a brief summary of it, as also of the remarks that have been made upon it.

The expression 'first day' cannot be proved to be used or implied in the New Testament more than three times; the words 'after eight days' being at best ambiguous, and therefore inadmissible in a question of evidence. Of the three times that are incontrovertible, in one of them the mention of the day was natural and necessary, it being the day of the resurrection. Another—that relative to the meeting held once at Troas, does not seem to be mentioned with any particular view, more than noticing the number of days during which the apostle staid there: but if it was mentioned with a particular design, the design not being disclosed, cannot be conjectured in favour of a new sabbath, without sup-

posing that to be fact, the truth of which remains to be proved. Neither the day nor the service are mentioned for their own sake, but for the sake of the miracle connected with them. As to the remaining mention of the first day, that of its appointment by an apostle for individual believers, in some churches, for certain weeks, 'laying by them in store' for a pious act of benevolence, as God had prospered them through the week; the first day of the week following, or the seventh of that which preceded, was the only alternative for the appointment: and except the old sabbath was repealed, which I do not admit, the seventh day was unfit for the appointment, on account of the religious duties which left no time for the secular act (supposing it to be lawful, considering the intent) that would naturally, if not necessarily, be performed at the time (on whatsoever day) the appointment took place, and against which association there is no caution.

The notice, then, of the first day at Troas is the only one of the three notices that cannot be accounted for.\* Is this repeated notice, then, so

\* Supposing the meeting at Troas to have taken place at Jerusalem instead, and the account of it to have immediately followed Acts 2. 46., would it then have been thought that the meeting, &c. proved the first day to be the weekly sabbath? If so, every day must have been a weekly sab-

wonderful as to entitle the day to a sacred character? Were it even certain that the expression 'after eight days' implied an additional mention of the first day, it ought not to appear so singular that people should come together on the same day of the week on which they met the preceding week, as to justify any other inference than that the time suited them. On the other hand, should the want of any extraordinary circumstance among Christians have occasioned the seventh day not to be mentioned in the sacred narrative more than any other day, it ought not to create a suspicion that it had lost the sacred character which was conferred upon it at the Creation. The absence of such a circumstance will undoubtedly be thought by every observer of the first day a sufficient reason for the silence of the sacred writer respecting that day, when he tells us that Paul and Barnabas were a whole year at Antioch, and that Paul was seven days at Tyre; though it cannot be pleaded on behalf of the first day, as it can of the seventh, that it had been of

bath. As to the injunction (1 Cor. 16. 2.) relative to a religious act on several other first days, it would seem that the daily acts of public worship at Jerusalem were by no means confined to one week. Had the supposition been a fact, the mention of the first day, and not of the rest, would have been attributed solely to the affair of Eutychus.

universal obligation from the commencement of time up to that moment.

That extraordinary and beneficial acts took place on the first day repeatedly and exclusively, either cannot be proved, or is not true; and were they both true, as also capable of being proved to be so, however calculated they might be to impress the minds of the apostles on the recurrence of the day of the week or of the day of the year when they happened, no effect on their conduct in consequence can be known to us, or lay any obligation upon us, as nothing is said in the inspired writings on these subjects; the pious acts which they record as having been performed or enjoined on the first day, not being stated by them as so performed or enjoined on account of the supernatural and beneficial events that had distinguished it.

No religious act was performed at Troas, which the sacred narrative does not declare to have been performed on other days likewise, as well as on the first day; the performance was only once, so far as is known; and we should not have known of that, had it not been for the affair of Eutychus, which would not have been the case, had it implied, or been designed to imply, a law; no law—particularly not a divine one, being ever promulgated indirectly or incidentally. Each of these acts (as also the private act of

pious benevolence, 1 Cor. 16. 2.) has been performed repeatedly, and even statedly performed in modern times, on week days, without any one's supposing that the performance indicated that the day was considered as a sabbath, or that it rendered it one. The act of pious benevolence just mentioned (1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.) to have been enjoined, was confined to certain churches; it was contingent, temporary, and probably intended to last but a few weeks at furthest—even if a caution had been given against performing on the same day the secular act which preceded it.

Neither Acts 20. 7. nor 1 Cor. 16. 2. informs us how the rest of the day (by far the greater part) was employed, or intended to be employed. That was not the case with the seventh day; for God is said at its institution to have *sanctified* it: and in the Fourth Commandment it is ordered to be kept holy. The expression 'Lord's day,' Rev. 1. 10. cannot prove the whole of the first day, in the two instances already referred to, to have been devoted to pious acts, much less that this was to be the case with every succeeding Sunday; on the contrary, the sanctification of the first day must be proved from these passages, before 'Lord's day' can be referred to that day—even admitting that the expression 'Lord's day'



necessarily means a day to be wholly devoted to religion.

Could this difficulty in the way of applying the phrase 'Lord's day' (on the supposition of its importing what has just been stated) to any day except the seventh day be surmounted, still the day of our Lord's ascension, if not that of his crucifixion, has as good a claim to the appellation in a case that is left to conjecture, as the day of his resurrection; and acts of public worship, both ordinary and extraordinary, are in the sacred narrative (Acts 2. 46.) stated to have taken place on those days, as well as on the first day. There are even strong reasons for suspecting that the words themselves are an interpolation, as I have before observed.

Such is the purport of what has been said for and against the Scriptural obligation to sanctify the first day. What is the result? This—that we have the example of the first Christians and of an apostle, for doing that on the first day, which it would have been lawful for us to do on that or on any other day without such an example; namely, the performance of public worship, and the celebration of the Lord's supper. But this is not the same with their doing these acts on the day because it was the sabbath. We have no example of their doing them for that reason. The acts themselves imply no such reason. We



have no right to ascribe them to that cause in the absence of Scriptural information ; and there are instances in our own time, not only of public worship, but also of the public celebration of the Lord's supper, on a week-day : which day, notwithstanding, no one would imagine to be a sabbath in the view of the worshippers on account of these transactions, even if the cause of selecting the day was unknown, since experience and observation show that a variety of causes may occasion it, each of which is wholly unconnected with that of a sabbath. The precedent, therefore, at Troas, authorizes that which would have been lawful without its authority ; but it enjoins nothing. The words in 1 Cor. 16. 2. enjoin something, it is true, to be done on the first day ; but the injunction is not attributed by the apostle to the sacred character of the day : it may easily be accounted for without such a supposition ; it was given only to certain churches, and it was to last only for a time.\*

\* In appointing a day, and that weekly, the apostle's sole object seems to have been to render the private sequestration more easy, certain, and productive. With these results, the day for the act was probably indifferent to him. He says nothing about public worship ; and it does not follow, from the Christians at Troas having had it once on the first day, that those elsewhere had it always on that day, or even once.

Is it possible that circumstances so ambiguous and so inconclusive, as those in the texts which mention the first day, should be able to establish the fact of a divine institution, when every one of that character which the Scriptures record, except that of sacrifices, which existed before there were any Scriptures, is stated so expressly, clearly, pointedly, particularly, and repeatedly?

I have already proved, from Acts 2. 46., that there were no religious acts performed on the first day, which were not performed among Christians on the seventh day, and on every day, though none of them except the first day is mentioned by name. But no one thinks that these acts make or prove any of the other days to be a sabbath. Nor would they make or prove the seventh day to be the sabbath, even were it mentioned by name, if nothing else could be said in support of its divine right to sanctification. There is, however, an account of its institution both in Genesis 2. 2. (before there were any Jews,) and in the Fourth Commandment, and for a reason which relates to all mankind as well as to the Jews. Its institution was not mentioned before it was wanted, being wanted for civil, moral, and religious purposes, (if wanted for them at all,) as soon as man and human society existed. Nor can its repeal be proved, without making it, like the ceremonial

law of the Jews, a shadow of which Christ was the body, which it never was, and also without the destruction of the Fourth Commandment. The change of dispensation did not make the repeal of the seventh day sabbath necessary, it being as adequate to evangelical purposes as any other day; and the gospel history, except the resurrection, relates as much to the seventh day as it does to the first. The reason given for its institution continued the same as ever, and will continue as long as the world stands—nor is there any instance of its secularization; on the contrary, it is invariably called *sabbath* after our Lord's time as well as before, without any warrant for prefixing the epithet *Jewish*. The institution, therefore, must in fairness be supposed to continue in force, were there no example at all of its observance, or could no reason be assigned for the want of one—neither of which is however the fact. But to prove the existence of an institution that was never yet heard of, there must be an example of something said or done in consequence; and that which is said or done ought necessarily to imply such an institution, and not be such words and acts as those that have been discussed; which might have been, whether the institution existed or not.

The texts which I have been discussing are almost always read with a prepossession that the

first day is the sabbath. If that appeared from other sources to be the fact, the text relative to Troas is certainly very consistent with such a fact. But the fact is not yet proved; and mere consistency with an assertion is by no means a proof of its truth.

But it is asked, Do not these passages, taken together, amount to a probability, if not to a certainty, of the divine institution they are brought forward to prove?—I cannot say that, in my opinion, they do. Far from resembling any of the institutions recorded in Scripture in ‘pomp and circumstance,’ the case they compose does not exhibit the slightest appearance of one. There is no leaning whatever in the meetings of the disciples together, even if they did meet on the first day more than once before Christ’s ascension; in Christ’s visiting and blessing them at these meetings; in the day of Pentecost falling that year on a Sunday (if it had been so, which I do not believe to have been the fact); in the religious acts performed or ordered to be performed on that day; or, lastly, in the expression ‘Lord’s day:’ whether these circumstances are taken singly or conjointly, there is, I repeat, no leaning in them towards the institution in question. No individual would think of drawing such an inference from them, in the absence of some other reason. To warrant such an instance,

a divine intimation that the incidents took place either because the first day was now the weekly sabbath, or because they were meant to prove it such, is absolutely necessary. Much less can it be reasonably thought that they have such a leaning, when it is recorded likewise that the disciples met on other days;—that Christ met with them on other days;—that he blessed them on another day;—that great and beneficial events took place on other days;—that religious acts, even the most solemn, were performed on other days;—and that only some hours of the first day were ever spent in religious acts, admitting that it is that which is called ‘the Lord’s’ day. As to the injunction of the apostle, (1 Cor. 16. 2.) it could only be fixed for the end of one week or the beginning of the next; and if the secular act, which was a prerequisite to the pious and benevolent one to be performed in private, immediately preceded it, (as I think it naturally if not necessarily did, and against which there is no caution,) the injunction seems to me to be fitter for a week-day than for a sabbath. There is at least no hint that the secular act took place on the day preceding.

The singular circumstances, therefore, are reduced to these: that the day should be named on which the meeting at Troas took place—and the expression ‘Lord’s day.’ There are no means, I



admit, of accounting for either. But total uncertainty is no proper ground for inference.\* Nothing can be inferred from the transactions at Troas taking place on the first day, any more than from the apostle's staying there seven days, which is equally unaccounted for. I may add, that were similar transactions to take place on a week-day in our time, and the reason for one day having been preferred to another day for that purpose be unknown, it would not be inferred that the worshippers did it on account of the day's being their sabbath, since it would be known that a variety of causes might have occasioned it. Respecting the 'Lord's day,' were it admitted that it must mean a day devoted to Christ, on account of its being memorable for something in his history, still it would be as likely to be the day of his crucifixion or of his ascension, as that of his resurrection; or if the latter be most likely, as the first day only is named, still it would claim religious acts only for a part of the Lord's day,

\* The first day probably obtained its appropriate name, as I have before hinted, from the circumstance of the inspired missionaries having frequent occasion to notice the day on which our Lord rose, and from their wish to mention it without circumlocution. After having thus obtained its appropriate name, it is easy to conceive that it was used on other occasions, especially where a circular notice was required.



as that is the utmost which is ever recorded concerning the first day.

The circumstances, therefore, which constitute the indirect evidence in question, turn out to be not twigs, which, though weak in themselves, when tied up in a bundle will be found sufficiently strong; but mere ciphers, which, however powerful they might prove to be with a significant figure, without such a figure cannot amount to more than nothing. The significant figure wanting in the present case is, that Christ has sanctified and blessed the first day, on account of his rising upon it.

To conclude these remarks on the Scriptural claim of the first day to be the weekly sabbath; the friends of it cannot justly affirm that the consequence of disproving its divine authority will be the superseding of the weekly sabbath altogether, till the non-obligation or repeal of the old sabbath is proved. That, in my opinion, for the reasons already given, still remains to be done. Till that is done, the arguments of the Sabbatarians against the right of the first day to consecration must be considered as tending to prevent the serious inconvenience of keeping two sabbaths, not to release the Christian world from obligation to keep any.

The dissatisfaction here expressed with the evidence produced from Scripture in support of

the first day sabbath, is by no means confined to the Sabbatarians. The observers of it who acknowledge that it possesses no divine claim to sanctification, are numerous and respectable. Grotius, and the Reformers in general, considered the sacred regard paid to the first day as perfectly optional. Tindal [See Morer, *p.* 216.] says, in his answer to Sir Thomas More, ‘We are lords of the sabbath, and may change it to Monday or to any other day, or appoint every tenth day, or two days in a week, as we find it expedient: Calvin is said to have once designed to transfer it to Thursday, ‘as an instance of Christian liberty;’ especially being the day whereon might be contemplated the most triumphant and glorious act of our Lord, his ascension into heaven.’ These great and good men could not have expressed themselves in this manner, if they had believed the first day to be the weekly sabbath by any precept or example in Scripture. Luther himself could not have regarded it in this light upon the ground of Rev. 1. 10., since he, as well as Calvin, (according to Morer, *p.* 47.) had little esteem for the Revelation as belonging to the sacred canon.

Bossuet, the famous Bishop of Meaux, in France, in the time of Louis XIV., charges the Protestants with inconsistency in rejecting the orders of the Church as not being founded on

Scripture, while they retained the first day sabbath, which was no more founded on it than the other. Morer tells us, (*p.* 58.) that the Royal Martyr, Charles the First, on the same principle thus argued for the observance of Easter with the ‘new Reformers’ in his reign: ‘I conceive the celebration of this feast was instituted by the same authority which changed the Jewish sabbath into the Lord’s day. For it will not be found in Scripture where Saturday is discharged to be kept, or turned into Sunday; wherefore it must be the Church’s authority that changed the one and instituted the other. Wherefore my opinion is, that those who will not keep the feast, may as well return to the observation of Saturday, and refuse the weekly Sunday. When any body can show me that herein I am in an error, I shall not be ashamed to confess and amend it.’

But those among the professed observers of the first day who virtually deny its divine authority to be a sabbath, are far more numerous, and belong to Christians of various descriptions. I consider in this light the whole of the Christian Fathers, Councils, Emperors, and Kings. For though they strongly recommend, and even enjoin, the observance of the first day, I do not recollect, in the extracts made by the advocates of the first day from their writings, decrees, or procla-

mations, a single appeal to Scriptural authority. They aver that it ought to be kept on account of our Lord's rising on it, but they never pretend to say that this is the judgment of Revelation as well as their own. They call the day a festival, but they never call it sabbath, (except metaphorically, according to Bishop White,) as the Scriptures call it the seventh day, or by any other name which necessarily implies that the whole day was kept; for 'Lord's day,' as has been shown, does not necessarily imply that,\* nor indeed is it so considered by numbers of its pious observers themselves, whether in ancient or in modern times.

How can this universal silence on the part of the Fathers and Councils relative to the Scriptural right of the first day to sanctification be accounted for? Was it because this right was universally acknowledged and respected by the Christians?† This was not the case during the three first centuries, when the regard paid to it did

\* As the days of the week are not of divine origin, either Thursday, Friday, or Sunday, might have been denominated 'Lord's day,' (if the phrase had not occurred in Rev. 1. 10.) by human authority, as being memorable in Christ's history, and only a part of it kept, if any at all.

† There is reason to believe that during the apostolic age the Christians universally observed the seventh day, since the Jews never charge them with not keeping it.

not exclude the seventh day sabbath from any of the churches, except at Rome and Alexandria, and when it was found necessary to issue fresh recommendations, exhortations, and injunctions for its observance, whatever might be the extent to which that observance was carried.\* It is true, we hear little, comparatively speaking, of the old sabbath, between the time of Constantine and the Reformation; but concern on account of the notorious secularization of the first day occasioned numerous orders from the civil and ecclesiastical authorities: still these orders are never enforced by any appeal to Scripture. Would they have neglected a measure so highly conducive to their object, had it really been, or had they thought that it was, in their power? Yet anxious as the authors of many of the proclamations and decrees that history records appear to be for the strict observance of the first day, they usually associate other days with it, and never once attempt to found its right on Scripture, any more than they do that of the others, which are acknowledged on all hands to derive

\* The observance of a day publicly and externally, merely, or partially, though it be done weekly, and though no other day is kept better, is not keeping a weekly sabbath according to Scripture, nor any proof that the observer intends it for such, without a declaration to that effect.



their sacred character solely from the Church. I can in no way account for this neglect, but on the ground that though they all thought the observance of the first day to be highly reasonable, and highly important to the interests of piety and good morals, yet it never once entered into their imaginations that it was founded on Scripture, or supported by divine authority.\*

\* The silence of the ancient Fathers and Councils respecting every text that is now produced in support of the first day's claim, may be thought sufficient to account for the omission to quote Rev. 1. 10. by St. Ignatius and others, without having recourse to the supposition that a part of it, namely, 'on the Lord's day,' is an interpolation. But it should be recollected, that this omission was only one of the arguments adduced to prove that supposition. Nor is it without considerable force. St. Ignatius ought to have quoted that text, if he omitted the others, to justify his calling the first day 'Lord's day,' (if he ever called it so, or thought that the Scriptures warranted and enforced the use of the phrase,) since he is the first writer who does so call it. A consistent Protestant could not indeed have received his interpretation and application of the words as infallible, and equivalent to inspiration; but his quotation would at least have proved the authenticity of the passage. The same may be said of those writers who lived between his time and that of Constantine. Their omission of the only words that give even the supposed appearance of divine authority for conferring this new appellation on the weekly Sunday, or for keeping a new sabbath, is, in my opinion, a strong proof that they were not in the text during that period.



During the three first centuries, the Fathers and Councils, as before proved, St. Ignatius himself included, strongly recommended and even enjoined the observance of the seventh day as well as that of the first. Would they have done this, had they believed the first day to have been substituted for the seventh day by any inspired writer? Would any one who now keeps the first day as the Christian sabbath by divine authority, recommend, much less enjoin, the observance of the preceding day?

The moderns, indeed, endeavour to account for the conduct of the ancient Christians, on the ground of the Jewish converts among them: but the latter make no such apology for themselves, nor does the New Testament make mention of any such complaisance, though there must have been as much occasion for it in the time of the apostles as afterward, since it is well known that the Jews in general were never more attached to their sabbath, than they were during that period; and those of them who became Christians cannot reasonably be supposed to have abandoned it themselves, even if they quietly acquiesced in the non-observance of it by the Gentile converts, which, considering their conduct relative to circumcision, is not very likely, had their tempers been ever tried. Till it be proved that the old sabbath is repealed, and that the new sabbath is of divine

appointment, nothing ought to appear more natural, than that the commandment of man did not altogether set aside for three centuries a divine commandment.

In fine, I do not recollect that there was any attempt to found the first-day sabbath upon the Scriptures, either in England or elsewhere, till about A. D. 1618, in the time of the Puritans : yet, according to the testimonies of Brerewood, White, and the Sabbatarian church-books or traditions, it appears that the state of the Sabbatarians in Germany, France, and England, from Luther's time, was such as to give abundant occasion for searching the Scriptures upon the subject, had the search appeared likely to prove favourable to the first day. The learned and pious writer, Morer, distinctly and candidly acknowledges (*p.* 56.) that he 'cannot imagine the first day sabbath a divine institution.'

The next class that I shall mention of indirect objectors to the divine authority of the first day among its observers, consists of all those who maintain principles incompatible with that idea. This class is likewise numerous and respectable. Bishop White and Dr. Wallis belong to it ; and in general all those, who, notwithstanding their attempts to prove the obligation to observe the first day from Scripture, assert that the Divine Being cannot have appointed any particular day

for the weekly sabbath, because it is impossible for all mankind to observe it during the same portion of absolute time, or in a distant age, and under other circumstances, to ascertain the weekly return of it. If these arguments have any force in them, the first day never can have been divinely instituted any more than the seventh. The like may be said of all those (and they are not few either in the Establishment or among the Dissenters) who say, with Dr. Wallis, that if the nation should change the weekly sabbath from Sunday to Tuesday, they would change with it.—Could men of conscience and piety do this, if they believed that the apostles appointed the first day to be the weekly sabbath, because our Lord rose upon it?—Nor is the opinion substantially less hostile to the first day, that the seventh part of time only is set apart for consecration by the Blessed God. I am aware, indeed, that this expression is by the advocates for the first day employed merely for the purpose of interpreting that of the seventh day in Genesis 2. 2, 3. and in the Fourth Commandment. But I do not know why it should not be employed also for the purpose of interpreting the expression ‘first day’ in the texts usually brought to prove the sanctification of that day by divine appointment. For those texts do not more definitively and exclusively point out the first, than those in the Old Testament do the last

day of the week. The consequence of such an extension and application will be, that Christians are at liberty to transfer the weekly sabbath from the day of the resurrection to some other, when, and as often, as they please, provided the change may be so contrived as to take place after six days' labour; which may easily be done by keeping the new day as well as Sunday in the first instance. A real and consistent friend of the first day sabbath, therefore, ought to dismiss the idea of the seventh part of time having been ordered to be sanctified, and confine himself to that of the first day having been ordered to be sanctified. To secure its exclusive and permanent consecration, he should say, as the Sabbatarians affirm concerning the day of God's rest in the parts of the Old Testament already alluded to, that it was the first day on which the important event of the resurrection happened—that no other day could claim the honour of that event—that the institution of Christ and his apostles relates not to the seventh part of time first, and to the first day afterwards, but solely to that day—that the appointment of the seventh part of time was only the necessary consequence of the institution, not the institution itself—that the first day must continue to be the sabbath till it be repealed by divine authority—and that whenever it was re-

pealed, the seventh part of time would inevitably be repealed with it.

I notice next as hostile to the opinion of the first day's being a Scriptural sabbath, a class of people who, though they publicly and externally keep it, yet do not regard it privately and mentally, as thinking that there is now no day, the twenty-four hours of which ought to be sacred to God, as the seventh day was formerly. I believe that there are many among the truly godly who thus think and act, and that, owing to certain circumstances, their number does not appear to be near so great as it really is. As the observance of another day does not render it inconsistent with their worldly convenience to regard the first day, so far as the laws of the land, the good opinion of their religious connexions, and facilities for promoting spiritual objects in the world and in the church require, they need not risk the discovery of their real sentiment by any act or neglect in their public conduct; and in what manner they employ themselves privately or mentally, not even their own families can tell, except they please to reveal it. These disclosures, however, I suspect, are not often made in private conversation, and much less openly: whence it happens that there are perhaps numbers who possess the reputation of sanctifying the first day without deserving it. I have reason to think that there



are evangelical ministers, as well as private Christians, in this class ; and that they are to be found both among the Dissenters and in the Establishment.

The next class of indirect adversaries to the divine authority of the first day sabbath is numerous indeed, as it comprehends almost the whole, if not the whole, of its serious observers. I refer to those who found the obligation to sanctify it, in part at least, upon the institution in Genesis 2. 2, 3. and upon the Fourth Commandment. This they do, as supposing that the institution, with its repetition, relates solely to the seventh part of time ; and since, in their opinion, this part is now determined by the New Testament to be the first day of the week, they think that the obligation contained in the institution to sanctify the seventh part of time, is transferred and confined to the first day. But I have already shown, that in both the passages of the Old Testament alluded to, it is the seventh or last day of the week, not the seventh part of time, that was sanctified by the Deity. He set apart for devotion the day on which he rested from the creation, and no other day of the week ; and neither our first parents, nor any of their posterity, were at liberty to alter the sabbath to another day, on account of having laboured the six preceding days, or under any other pretence ; which they would have had a



right to do, had only the seventh part of time abstractedly been instituted. The same may be said of the Fourth Commandment, which is merely a repetition of the institution, as appears from the reason assigned for the precept at the close of it. By the expression in it, 'the seventh day,' the seventh part of time abstractedly is not meant, but the seventh or last day of the week. It was that day which the Jews were in the habit of observing at the time the Decalogue was given; the reason assigned for it will not suit any other day of the week than that which was the weekly return of the day on which God rested in Paradise: nor were the Jews at liberty to change it for any other, as they would have been had it related merely to the seventh part of time in general; for there is no precept which confines them to the observance of the last day of the week, if the Fourth Commandment does not: nor would the commandment have obliged them to keep any other day, had the seventh day been repealed before Christ's time, whatever reason or the New Testament may do. Whether in Paradise or at Sinai, the seventh part of time was instituted merely as the necessary consequence of instituting the seventh day; it was not instituted itself: in both the cases I am speaking of, its sacred claim rests entirely upon that of the seventh day; and whenever the latter terminates, the former

terminates with it, so far as Genesis 2. 2, 3. and the Fourth Commandment are concerned.\*

If, then, the seventh day is repealed, as the pious observers of the first day suppose, the institution in Genesis, and the Fourth Commandment, are repealed with it; and then the seventh day, the only time they refer to, being deprived of its sacred claim, nothing remains in them to be sanctified, notwithstanding the morality of the term itself; and the precept having ceased, there is no further occasion for the reason that was assigned for it. Christians have no more to do with these parts of Scripture, than they have with the institution of sacrifices, or with that of circumcision. They must look to the New, and not to the Old Testament, as well for the obligation to sanctify one day in a week, as for the particular day which they are to sanctify.

Nor do I see why this should not suffice them, if they really think that the New Testament institutes the first day. Why should they have recourse to passages that are either made void, or

\* Those who observe Sunday on the ground of Acts 20. 7. and 1 Cor. 16. 2, 3. would think it strange to be told that *first day* in those texts meant only the seventh part of time, and that any one of the seven days would do as well as Sunday. Neither in Genesis 2. 2, 3. nor in the Fourth Commandment, was the seventh part of time first instituted, and then the seventh day.

that order a different day to be sanctified? These passages could not avail the new sabbath, if it wanted their help. But if the first day be really appointed by Christ or his apostles to be the weekly sabbath, it needs no such help. The obligation to sanctify it follows of course. Not only is the sacred character of the seventh part of time which was lost by the repeal of the seventh day (if it was repealed) revived and restored by the new institution, but, what is far more, the very day is designated, and is no more alterable by man than the seventh day was.

I shall, no doubt, be asked whether a law may not be repealed and altered in part, without repealing and altering the whole? Certainly it may. Both in Genesis 2. 2, 3. and in the Fourth Commandment, the Divine Being, if he had pleased, could have substituted 'the seventh part of time' for 'the seventh day,' without altering the part relative to sanctification; but the reason for the latter must have been struck out, as being irrelevant. Or, retaining the part relative to sanctification, the words substituted might have been 'the first day,' and the reason assigned for it might have been, 'for the Lord Jesus Christ, having died for the sins of men, rose on the first day,' instead of the present reason. But as the Blessed God has not thought fit to name any of these changes himself, no one can be warranted

in making them even mentally.\* There is at present no alternative but that of retaining or rejecting the whole of the Fourth Commandment.†

I have heard it said, that when reference is made to the Fourth Commandment on behalf of the first day, it is made not to the letter, but to the spirit, the morality, and the equity of it; and that these are confined to sanctifying the seventh part of time. But proper as the distinction between the letter and the spirit‡ of a law may be, when circumstances only are concerned, that is not the case when the essence is concerned. The spirit of a law is synonymous with its essence; and in the present case is this, that God has ap-

\* To justify these mental alterations, the first day's claim should have been mentioned in the New Testament, with some reference there to Genesis 2. 2, 3. or to the Fourth Commandment. The first day is not mentioned at all in Hebrews 4. much less any right that it has to be a day of holy rest. Our Lord did not enter heaven, the only rest there spoken of, on the first day, upon finishing the work of redemption. The mental alterations in the old institution of the sabbath, were they justified by the New Testament, would amount to a repeal both of Gen. 2. 2, 3. and of the Fourth Commandment.

† Were the purport of law subject to mental alterations, transgression would be impossible.

‡ The Roman Catholics pretend that they use idols, not as the objects of devotion, but as helps to it; as if the former only was the spirit or essence of the Second Commandment;

pointed a certain day to be sanctified weekly for a particular reason, which reason is specified, and which is applicable to no other day. The 'seventh day,' therefore, is essential to the Fourth Commandment, as the reason given for it at the end of the commandment shows. It is not a contingency, like the case put in the commandment of a man's having children or servants; and if a Jew had presumed to treat the seventh day as a circumstance, by transferring the sanctity of it to another day, the daring act would have cost him his life. But if a Jew was not warranted in treating it so, how can such a treatment be warrantable in a Christian? No law can mean one thing to one subject, and another to another. A Christian may possibly not be subject to the Fourth Commandment, as the commandment is positive, and therefore repealable, if God pleased; but if he be, he must put that construction upon it which it has always borne among the Jews, which it bore in our Lord's time, and which it bore in the opinion of the holy women, and of the evangelist Luke, (ch. 23. 56.) many years after the ascension. With respect to the claim of the seventh part of time to sanctification, could that be proved, it would be a dictate of reason; it would not bind us, apart from the institution either in Genesis 2. 2, 3. or the Fourth Commandment. But I have before shown



that its claim is no better than that of the sixth or eighth part, and that the equity of either of them would appear as great as that of the seventh part of it, if God had been pleased to institute it, and thus to have made the week consist of six or of eight days, instead of seven. The precept is wholly positive. The reference, therefore, of one who observes the first day to the Fourth Commandment, for proving or enforcing its right to sanctification, is useless, and injurious to his cause. He may allude to it by saying that the first day has as good a claim to sanctification by means of the New Testament, as the seventh day had by means of the Old, if he can prove the position; but he cannot prove its claim by means of the Old Testament. He will only show, by the attempt, that the seventh day is unrepealed, and that therefore he ought to keep it; thus making good the words of Bishop White, that whoever attempts to prove the right of the first day to sanctification from the Fourth Commandment, is a Sabbatarian. He who thus acts, betrays his doubts concerning the sufficiency of the evidence by which the claim of the first day is supported, by stating, in order to supply the defect, its resemblance to the seventh day, in being, like that, the seventh part of time: for such a resemblance is no more necessary to its being a divine institution, (provided such a re-



semblance existed,) than that of baptism to circumcision would be, in order to prove the divine authority of the former. Suppose the New Testament had appointed two sabbaths in a week (as Tindal wished to have) instead of the original one, would the contrariety of this to the appointment of the Old Testament have proved that it was not of God? By no means. On the other hand, no resemblance between a supposed new institution and an old one can prove that the former is divine, notwithstanding the divine authority of the latter.

In fine, to the number of those who indirectly agree with the Sabbatarians in denying the divine institution of the first day sabbath, must be added all who, professing to observe Sunday, perform secular work on it without necessity—all who in foreign countries, whether clergy or laity, see a part of it at least publicly devoted to business or amusement, without remonstrating openly in a body against the profane encroachment—all magistrates who decide that secular occupation in private on the day is lawful, provided it be exercised for amusement, and not for gain—all who travel on it unnecessarily—in short, all who spend the parts of it that are not wanted for public worship in reading that which is not religious, in conviviality and frivolous discourse, or in slumber.

The facts that have been considered separately, united together show, that though the repeal of the seventh day sabbath is acquiesced in very generally in Christendom, the acknowledgment of the first day as the Scriptural sabbath never has been, nor is at present, any thing near so general.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the supposed Authority of Apostolic Tradition to render the First Day the Weekly Sabbath.*

WHATEVER conviction may be felt by individuals who observe the first day respecting the evidence which the New Testament affords of its divine claim to sanctification, the conviction is very far from being general in the Christian world. No one can doubt this, who recollects the proof contained in the last Chapter not only of the indirect and virtual, but also of the positive and avowed disbelief of that position. The earliest Fathers and Councils, strongly as they recommend and enjoin the celebration of the first day as a festival in honour of our Lord's resurrection,

never once plead the example, any more than the precept, of the apostles for it. They distinguish the day sometimes by the title of 'Lord's day,' as well as by the appellations of 'first day' and 'Sunday;' but they never tell us that they derived the expression from the Revelation, and much less attempt to justify the application of it to the weekly Sunday by quotations from the sacred writings, notwithstanding the general association of the seventh day with the first day during that period in the weekly observances of Christendom, proves the doubts that prevailed concerning its exclusive right to sanctification. 'This practice was reserved for the modern advocates of the first day; it has not, I believe, existed much more than two centuries—many ages later than the time when the right of the Revelation to be received into the sacred canon was denied by so many eminent observers of the first day.

The decrees of councils, the edicts of princes, and the laws of nations, in favour of sanctifying the first day, both before and since the time of Protestantism, proceed chiefly, if not solely, upon the opinions and practice of the first Christians after the apostolic age, derived, as they suppose, by tradition from the apostles. The most eminent writers on the side of Sunday, such as White and Morer, take the same ground. They seem to think that though the apostles never in-

stituted the first day sabbath in their writings, nor ever did or directed to be done any thing on that day, assigning its sacred character as the reason, or any thing which they might not have done, had it been another day, yet that they reckoned it to be the weekly sabbath, and kept it as such—that their disciples, acquaintance, and contemporaries, knew these particulars to be facts, and observed the day accordingly—that from them the tradition passed to the Christians in the next age—and that from them it passed to the ages following in succession.

Whether or not the observers of the first day would acquiesce in this tradition, if they did not think that it was wanted to cover a defect in the title of the first day to consecration from written revelation, or if it did not at least coincide with and confirm that sense which they give to the texts usually adduced in support of the first day's claim, I am unable to say. But they cannot justly blame the Sabbatarians for reminding them on this occasion of the old maxim, the soundness of which they in general admit, that 'the Bible, and that only, is the religion of Protestants.'\* As

\* Tradition may possibly convey truth, as appears in the instances of the 'angels that kept not their first estate;' of the name borne by the evil spirit who tempted our first parents in the form of a serpent; of the prophecy delivered by

Protestants, they themselves maintain the Scriptures to be a perfect rule of faith and practice. They cannot consent to the association of Tradition with Revelation ; persuaded that, however it might be the duty of the Thessalonians to ‘hold fast the traditions they had received,’ by word as well as by epistle, from an apostle, it was not the duty of those to do so, who had received them merely from one that said or wrote that he received them from an apostle ; since the contrary practice would open a wide door to all manner of error and superstition, whether arising from weakness or from wickedness. They insist also that it is the duty and the right of every one to determine the meaning of Scripture for himself—provided he does not injure the civil rights of his neighbour or of his country. Accordingly, they deny that the ‘rock on which was to be built the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,’ was the person of Peter, and his pretended successors, the Popes : nor can

Enoch ; of the names of the magicians who withstood Moses in Egypt ; and of the contest between Michael the archangel and the devil concerning the body of Moses. But their truth could not have been ascertained, if they had not received the sanction of Revelation. It is upon that authority that we receive them, and not upon the authority of tradition.



they admit that the Church of Rome has a right to impose its sense of Scripture upon the common people, under the pretence that the unlearned and unstable, who ‘wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction,’ are to be found only among them.

Upon the same principles, which both reason and revelation strongly inculcate, the Sabbatarians act, when they reject the sense usually given of the phrase ‘Lord’s day,’ Rev. 1. 10. even admitting that it was written by the apostle John. The phrase, indeed, though sometimes used concerning the weekly Sunday by the ancient Fathers, is never quoted and produced by them as from the Scriptures. But if they had quoted it and applied it in this manner, their authority ought to avail nothing with Protestants against the reasons before assigned for the impossibility of determining its meaning and use by the help of any other part of Holy Writ. Of these Fathers, St. Ignatius is among, if not the earliest. The editions of the epistle written by him to the Megarenses, which is most frequently referred to by the first day writers on the sabbath, differ so much from each other respecting the precise words of the author relative to this subject, and commentators differ so much concerning the sense of the words which they all agree that the author did write, that it seems to be wholly uncertain whether he is speaking of Judaism, or of the seventh day

sabbath; of the Lord's day, or of the Lord's life; of celebrating the first day instead of, or after, keeping the sabbath.\* [See Morer, *p.* 206.] I have already quoted his injunction in another part to keep the seventh day. At the same time, there certainly are passages in which he strongly urges the Christians to observe the first day as a festival in honour of Christ's resurrection, though without ever reminding them of the passage in Rev. 1. 10. much less applying it to his purpose. Yet if he had quoted it, and explained it in favour of the first day,—if he had even told them that his cotemporary and master, the apostle John, called the first day of the week by this name—that he kept it himself—and that he strongly inculcated the observance of it both in conversation and preaching, as being part of the will of Christ, (all which it was natural for St. Ignatius to do, and which he doubtless would have done had the things been true, considering his object,) neither the Christians of his time, nor any in succeeding ages, could, consistently with the Protestant maxims, have received his testimony as supplementary to Scripture, or as infallibly interpretative of it. Much less could they be justified in receiving any opinion or practice as

\* According to Morer, (*p.* 88,) he calls Sunday 'Lord's day' in his Epistle to the Philippians.

apostolic from any Father or Council that was not cotemporary or acquainted with the Apostles. To treat the Fathers and Councils fairly, however, they no more profess, than St. Ignatius does, in sometimes recommending or enjoining the observance of the first day under the name of the *Lord's day*, to be quoting or commenting upon the words of Scripture.

But in opposition to these remarks, an idea prevails on the subject of tradition, which will require some discussion. It has been said that though the Protestants object in general to the introduction of tradition to supply any supposed defect in the matter of Scripture, or to ascertain its sense, yet they do not deny its use in religion altogether. They think it lawful and even necessary in certain cases to admit its authority. The ancient Patriarchs and the Gentiles knew the divine institution of sacrifices, and observed it, only in consequence of tradition. From the same source the Protestants derive the knowledge of the books which they consider as composing the canon of the New Testament, as also of their genuine contents. It is held by many Protestants, that early and universal tradition is a sufficient ground for receiving any religious doctrine or practice whatever.

I cannot say that the sentiments just stated appear to me to be correct, or at least useful in

practice. I admit, indeed, that there must have been many things said and done by the apostles, as well as by our Lord himself, which are not recorded in the New Testament—that they must have been known to certain people—that many of them were communicated by speech, and perhaps writing, to cotemporaries—that from them they passed to the next generation—and some of them, at least, from that to a third, without the possibility of determining with precision the time when the transmission would wholly cease. I admit, further, that certain of the particulars might be communicated and handed down with accuracy. But since it is impossible to tell which of these particulars contained in human writings are truly stated, and which are not, there is no safety but in rejecting them all without exception, in estimating what God would have us believe and do. There is the more occasion to act in this manner, as the apostle tells the Thessalonians that the ‘mystery of iniquity’ was already working. If speeches and actions were falsely attributed to a divine origin, when detection was possible, how much more might the practice be expected to exist, when detection was impossible? It was not even every thing that an apostle said or did, which, could it have been verified, would be binding on our faith and practice: and it is reasonable to think that whatsoever the Holy Spirit

intended to have such an effect, would be thus represented by Inspiration in writing, and preserved.

Antiquity, therefore, cannot be a sufficient proof of purity in a tradition; for no tradition relative to the first day can possibly be more ancient than the 'mystery of iniquity' just referred to. Its spread, too, notwithstanding its odious nature, might be sufficiently extensive to give it the appearance of universal—especially after the time of the apostles.

With respect to the regard shown during the patriarchal ages to the custom of sacrificing, as to a divine institution, though known only by tradition, it will afford no justification, proper as it was then, to the reception of a doctrine or duty as divine on such a ground, since the Christian era. Tradition was the only revelation then in existence. It could be better relied on then than now, on account of the opportunity afforded of access to the origin of it, and of the few individuals through which it passed. In the case of sacrifice, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive how the idea of such a practice could ever have entered into the mind of man, if the Divine Being did not introduce it himself. The Patriarchs, both before and after the flood, who offered sacrifice, were themselves inspired, and therefore did not rest their idea of the divine will re-



specting this matter upon tradition, but upon their own knowledge. The other ancients indeed, not having the same advantage, might be liable to mistake a matter of indifference for a duty: but they were not liable in doing so to abrogate or misinterpret a written command of God, by adopting a custom that was merely commanded by man. I may add, that though there is no instance on record in which the authenticity or genuineness of the tradition was suspected, yet if a doubt on the subject had arisen, there is no reason to think that the entertainer of it would not have been excused for non-compliance. In each of these particulars, the situation of Christians since the days of the apostles is completely the reverse.

The case of the books received or rejected, wholly or in part, as sacred, is somewhat like that of sacrifices. The canon of the New Testament (and consequently of the Old, the divinity of which is acknowledged by the New) is obtained through tradition; but necessarily so, and not unaccompanied by corroborative circumstances. Since not every one that lived in the age of the apostles, and much less in a succeeding age, could have access to them to learn the authenticity of a book, and the genuineness of its contents, miraculous interposition must have taken place universally and perpetually, if tradition had not

been employed. In consequence of this, no doubt, the just claim of some books was not admitted without hesitation, and not even with it, by all who bore the Christian name. There was danger, on the other hand, of receiving some that had no right to be in the canon; and all, in being copied, were liable to defect, to interpolation, or to various readings. But no serious evil has arisen, or could arise, from these disadvantages.

Examination of the evidence for and against a book will enable every one to judge for himself of the justice or injustice of its claim to a place in the sacred canon. By comparing the manuscripts and the versions in different languages with others, the text may be corrected or improved.\* But in cases where neither of these expedients can take place, the substance of Scripture will remain, whether particular books, passages, or readings, be received or rejected. The phrase 'on the Lord's day,' (Rev. 1. 10.) whether interpolated or not, can, in my opinion, throw no light, and consequently can have no influence, on the question relative to the Scriptural weekly sabbath.

The sacred canon, therefore, is necessarily re-

\* Human writings of high antiquity pass current, notwithstanding their various readings and obscurities.

ceived on the ground of tradition ; but not wholly so, nor without peculiar pledges for its purity. It was not requisite, for the divine character of the New Testament, that there should be a tradition in favour of each book, and each text or reading in each book, that is as ancient as the time of the apostolic age, or that is universal ; neither of which is true. The harmony among the different books with respect to their contents—the comparative insignificance of the doubts which have arisen relative to particular texts, readings, and even whole books, whether received into the holy canon or not—and their beneficial effect on the hearts and lives of men, afford essential aid and support to tradition. But none of these circumstances can be pleaded in favour of any new article of faith or of duty being conveyed by tradition. The article of faith or the duty in question might easily have been made a part of Revelation ; and its not being so, is a proof of its being no tradition from an apostle. With respect to the sense of a text, had it contained any new doctrine or duty, the Scriptures themselves would have furnished means for ascertaining it, and would not have left us to seek it from men no less deficient in judgment, integrity, and diligence, than ourselves. Where such means then are wholly wanting, the text can be of no use to us. Human writings can

only illustrate an article of faith or a duty, the general meaning and reality of which are known and acknowledged without them. They can add no explanation or proof that enlarges the system of faith and practice. Their sense, too, is as liable to be contested as that of Revelation. In fine, oral tradition might give an interpretation of the text quite different from what appeared to us to be the true meaning, and in that case, if not rejected, would render written revelation useless. Tradition, therefore, was not wanted for conveying a new sabbath, much less for explaining a passage of Scripture supposed to contain such a notice; as the phrase 'Lord's day,' for instance. Nor is there any circumstance that tends to confirm a tradition of such a sabbath, as there is to confirm the traditions relative to the divine institution of sacrifices before the time of Moses,\* the variety of the books contained in the sacred canon, and the truth of the things contained in those books. There is no more reason in the nature of things for a weekly celebration of our Lord's resurrection, than for one on

\* There is no way of accounting for the ceremony, but by the supposition of a divine institution. It is rendered credible, both by the measure which the Divine Being adopted for clothing our first parents, and by his order to the Patriarchs to sacrifice.

account of his ascension ; nor is any more notice taken of the resurrection on the first day by the observers of it, than may be taken, and in fact is taken, of it by the Sabbatarians on the seventh day. No social or public act of religion is recorded to have taken place on the first day, which did not take place every day among the earliest converts. It nowhere appears that the whole of it was ever kept sacred ; and though Sunday was very early, and after some centuries extensively, called ‘ Lord’s day,’ yet Rev. 1. 10. is never pleaded as an authority for so doing. The words ‘ Lord’s day’ are never mentioned by the ancient Fathers as a quotation from Scripture, but as Good Friday, &c. are mentioned. It is wholly uncertain whether they ever intended Sunday to be the weekly sabbath, or kept it like one—especially as they kept the seventh day in the same manner. The same services (the Lord’s supper included) were performed by them on both days ; and the performance of them any day, even weekly, gives no proof of keeping a sabbath, without saying so.

The case, then, of the first day is wholly different from that of the sacrifices in patriarchal times, and that of the books comprehended in the canon of the New Testament, together with the purity of their contents in substance, since the divine claim of the former might have been con-



veyed without tradition; nor has the asserted tradition of it from the apostles any confirmatory circumstances, as the latter cases have. These objections to its reception as an apostolic tradition would be solid, were it ever so ancient and universal. But it is neither one nor the other so considerably or exclusively as it is thought to be.

Though St. Ignatius certainly recommends the observance of the first day as a festival, there is no proof that he meant by it a sabbath like that which is described in Isaiah 58. 13.; nor is there any proof that it ever was kept so till A. D. 1618, about the time of the Puritans, by any considerable number of people, or, indeed, that it has been kept to that extent since, except by the Presbyterians (between whom and the Puritans there was originally no great difference) in the British dominions, in Holland, and in the United States of North America that were formerly subject to Great Britain. The divine claim of the seventh day under the Christian dispensation is not founded by its votaries on apostolic tradition, it being enough, in their opinion, that the apostles never repealed or secularized it. But if it had needed such a support, its claim on the ground of antiquity would have been as good as that of the first day; for St. Ignatius (as has been shown) does not recommend or enjoin one.

of the days more strongly than he does the other. With respect, indeed, to universality of prevalence, the first day has the advantage of the seventh day, since, according to ecclesiastical history, it was regarded at every place in Christendom; whereas the seventh day was not observed either at Rome or Alexandria: and after the fourth century, we hear little more comparatively of it till the time of the Reformation.\* But the errors of Popery, though equally ancient and once as extensively prevalent as the observance of the first day can be, are not for these reasons to be considered by the Protestants to be apostolic traditions.

To represent the case accurately, the earliest Fathers and Councils in general never plead apostolic tradition in favour of the first day, any more than they plead apostolic precept or example. St. Ignatius produces no authority for celebrating the day on which Christ rose as a weekly festival, except his own: he does not even tell us that the generality of Christians concurred with him in his view and wish. The Fathers and Councils, the ecclesiastics and princes who pursue the same object, urge only their own opinion, or that of their predecessors, as recorded in the history of the Church. The Protestants alone who,

\* See the account of the Sabbatarians in Chap. vi.

like White and Morer, admit the insufficiency of the evidence adduced by them to prove the first day to be the Scriptural weekly sabbath, attempt to supply the defect by apostolic tradition; and many of them, as Charles the First did, found the claim of the first day to sacred regard entirely upon the authority of the Church, without the smallest reference to the apostles.

To return to the supposed tradition from the apostles concerning the substitution of the first day for the seventh day sabbath, and the attempt to authenticate it in modern times by the plea of antiquity and universality.

There are cases existing, in which the opponents of the Sabbatarians are as little influenced by considerations of this nature, as the Sabbatarians themselves. The history of the Church notices no power that was exercised over the faith and practice of Christians, except that of ecclesiastics, till the reign of Constantine; and even that prince did not exercise it till toward the close of his reign, (for he only presided in the Council of Nice,) except in his decrees concerning Sunday, issued, it is probable, solely by the advice and under the influence of Pope Sylvester. [See Morer, *p.* 57.] The tradition, therefore, relative to supremacy, if from the apostles, is plainly in favour of ecclesiastical authority; and no doubt both the Popes and the popish councils avail themselves

of the circumstance. But will the Protestant states admit this plea? Will they not say that the tradition owes its existence and continuance merely to the want of a Christian prince, and that as soon as there was one, it became proper that the tradition should cease and determine? I shall not examine the solidity of this reasoning, but shall only observe upon it, that it is manifest, from the opinion of the Protestant states, that tradition supposed to be apostolic on account of its antiquity and universality, is not in all cases and for ever binding upon Christians.

Again:—will the Protestant Dissenters allow the fasts and feasts of the Church to have originated with the apostles? Some of them, however, (particularly Easter,) occur as early in history as the sacred character of the first day, and were regarded no less universally by Christians for many ages.—Will the Dissenters allow the ancient and universal tradition concerning the appellations ‘saint’ and ‘bishop,’ as used in the Christian Church, to be apostolical? Convinced as they may be that St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, got his idea of ‘Lord’s day,’ and that of celebrating it as a festival on account of our Lord’s resurrection, from the apostle John, they are not equally convinced, I believe, that he obtained his title of ‘saint,’ (if he ever used it,) together with his diocese, from the same source: yet I think it

would be difficult for them to prove that there is better reason to credit the one than to credit the other. They will not deny that 'saint' and 'bishop' are in the New Testament, as well as 'first day' and 'Lord's day' itself (supposing it to have any right to be there); and if tradition has authority to fix the sense and application of the latter words, why not to fix those of the former also?

Among the instances of doctrines and practices which Bishop White enumerates as proper to be received upon the ground of tradition from the apostles, are the 'Lord's day,' (in the sense of the weekly Sunday, with its application, in part at least, to sacred purposes,) and 'infant baptism.' My Baptist brethren in general will, I believe, more readily acquiesce in the first, than in the last of these instances. I know not, however, upon what ground, except upon what I admit to be a very substantial one; namely, that there is no case of infant baptism in all the New Testament. But, in my opinion, it is quite as easy to show, that in the different texts where 'households' are said to have been baptized, infants must have been included, as to show that the disciples could not come together to 'break bread,' nor an apostle preach to them, or order money to be laid up in store by individual Christians for an act of pious benevolence, on the first



day, without converting it into a sabbath, or proving that it was so considered and meant to be so considered.

Here it will probably be asked, If the custom of treating the first day as sacred did not originate with the apostles, with whom did it originate? I have no objection to give a direct answer to the question: but before I do so, I must observe, that the conclusiveness of the reasoning against the sacred character of the first day does not in the least depend upon the possibility of discovering and proving its origin to be elsewhere, and not with the apostles. Errors in doctrine and practice may exist, though their origin be utterly unknown: as the invocation of departed spirits, and the custom of mingling water with the wine in the sacrament, which were introduced before the end of the second century, and the sources of which can only be conjectured. If the 'mystery of iniquity worked' in the days of the apostle Paul, notwithstanding our ignorance of its particular nature, as well as of its source, why should not innovations and corruptions be supposed to arise immediately afterwards, though their origin be equally concealed? It is reasonable to suppose that they may have even sprung up and abounded much more, however mysterious their cause. It does not follow, therefore, from an opinion or a practice existing in the age next to that of the

apostles—perhaps in the apostolic age itself, and its origin being unknown, that it cannot be an error, but that it must originate with the apostles : and if this be possible of an error that is nameless, why not also of one that has a name? It may likewise not be trivial, but such a one as is wrought by ‘the mystery of iniquity,’ most gross and injurious. Of course the transfer of the weekly sabbath from the seventh day to the first may be an error, and no tradition from the apostles, were it absolutely impossible to account for its origin.

I proceed to state my conjecture concerning the circumstance that gave rise to celebrating the first day as a holy festival. It originated, as I think, in the wish and proposal of some Christians to distinguish the day by some religious service, (including the Lord’s supper, perhaps,) and a love-feast, in commemoration of our Lord’s rising upon it. Whether this was or was not done in the time of the apostles, it is impossible to say. I see nothing, however, against the possibility of its taking place during their time; for surely if ‘the mystery of iniquity’ began to work in their age, it is not incredible that a service which contained nothing in it that might not be done innocently, and which had not actually been done [Acts 2. 46.] on every day, might not be performed for a purpose, which, though unne-

cessary, had nothing criminal in it. But there is certainly nothing in the texts usually produced in favour of the first day, which indicates the existence of such a custom so early—much less that the apostles authorized or participated in it. The account of the meeting held at Troas (Acts 20. 7.) mentions nothing of its having taken place in consequence of our Lord's resurrection, or of any particular notice taken on that occasion of this great and good event that occurred on it, or of any uncommon thanksgiving and rejoicing of the assembly present, either at that time, or on any former occasion—all which would naturally have existed in the case supposed, and which, no doubt, did exist for some time, when the custom was actually introduced.

The expression 'Lord's day,' indeed, in Rev. 1. 10. has in modern times been thought to prove that the apostle John not only knew of the custom, but that he sanctioned it, and even commanded the whole day weekly to be kept as the sabbath in the room of the old one. But I have already shown that this does not appear from Scripture; and therefore if St. Ignatius had really quoted the expression as from the Revelation, and commented upon it agreeably to its modern sense and application, notwithstanding his opportunities for knowing the opinion and practice of the apostle John on the subject, his interpreta-

tion could not have been received according to the Protestant maxim, which admits of no new doctrine or precept upon the ground of tradition. But he never uses the expression 'Lord's day' as a quotation, (if he uses it at all,) and his not quoting and arguing from it, I have stated to be one of my reasons for thinking the words to be an interpolation. As to the question how he or any other came to call the first day 'Lord's day,' if he did not take it from the Revelation, I answer, as before, that when the authors of the custom (whoever they were, and whether they lived in the time of the apostles or afterwards) agreed to distinguish the first day in the manner that has been mentioned, nothing was more natural for them than to give the day a new name, as they did that of the crucifixion; and considering their object, what name was more appropriate than 'Lord's day,' or 'Christ's day?'

Whether the day was observed so often as weekly at the beginning, or whether it was confined to 'Easter Sunday,' which is noticed by St. Ignatius with equal zeal, cannot be known. The love-feast seems to have quickly given way to an entertainment more sumptuous and luxurious, if

\* The day, however, was not exclusively or generally called 'Lord's day,' till the fourth century; which is an objection to its divine origin and present application.

any judgment can be formed of it from the nature of a festival by which the day was called for ages, and the repeated prohibitions issued against fasting on it. As to the sanctification of the whole day in the manner of a sabbath, (Isaiah 58. 13.) the term 'festival,' even a religious one, neither usually implies any such thing, nor does it appear to have existed till after many centuries.

No one can wonder at the origin I have assigned for the custom in question, who recollects the number of days that are accounted sacred, in part at least, in the Latin and Greek churches, and how many anniversaries are distinguished from other days among Protestants in our own time, by abstinence from secular employment, attendance on public worship, and festivities. There are reasons given for them all; but Scriptural authority neither is nor can be pleaded for any of them, as enjoining them. According to Grotius, these public manifestations of thankfulness and joy on the first day were at first optional: but the instructions of Fathers, and the decrees of Councils, soon made them obligatory. Their proving injurious to the sacred regard paid to the seventh day agreeably to the Fourth Commandment, with which regard they were associated till the time of Constantine, and their final triumph over it in the Christian-Roman empire,



are not the only instances in which human traditions have superseded a divine precept. The persecutions every where raised against the Jews after the destruction of their city and temple by the Romans, and the risk run by the Christians of being confounded with them and of being treated like them, on account of their keeping the same sabbath, tended greatly to facilitate and extend the observance of the first day festival, as it was called. The festival being weekly, as well as the seventh day sabbath—its services being the same—the respect it apparently showed to Christ—and the inconvenience of keeping two days together, strengthened this tendency. To the decrees of Constantine, however, in favour of this day exclusively, in opposition to the Fathers and Councils that had preceded, and, so far as is known, without even taking the sense of any council as he did at Nice, is chiefly to be attributed, in my opinion, that prevalence throughout Christendom which it has ever since possessed.

If this account of the origin whence proceeded this regard paid in the early ages of Christianity to the first day be objected to as resting on conjecture, I reply, that I do not pretend to state the precise fact, of which history gives no information. In a case where (as I have shown) I am not obliged to give any account at all, conjecture is quite sufficient. The supposition is not like

that by which the prevalence of Sabbatarianism in the ages before Constantine has been attempted to be accounted for, namely, the accommodating spirit of the Gentile converts toward their brethren from among the Jews, about which the New Testament and the Fathers are equally silent, and which, till the repeal of the old sabbath be proved, may be accounted for much more naturally and satisfactorily. The conjecture I have hazarded is possible, and even highly probable, considering the numerous declarations made by individuals and public bodies of the greatest respectability who kept the first day, that its claim rested entirely on the authority of the Church. In short, the Scriptures were never appealed to on the subject till the time of the Puritans. St. Ignatius, as already noticed, states his recommendation of it only as an idea of his own; and the subsequent writers either express their own opinion in like manner, or follow his.

I wish to remind my Baptist friends of the accounts given, by them, of the origin of Pædobaptism, and the Dissenters in general of the sources whence, in their opinion, Episcopacy, together with the fasts and feasts observed in the primitive Church, particularly Easter Sunday, had their rise. They are mentioned as early in Ecclesiastical History as the first day is. I perfectly agree with my friends respecting the probability of these

accounts: but they are as incapable of being proved, as my hypothesis concerning the origin of sanctifying the first day.

I observe, finally, that my pious friends in the Establishment no more approve than I do of the corruptions of Christianity in the second and third centuries noticed by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others: such as carrying the Eucharist to private houses after it had been consecrated at Church; mingling water with the wine used in the Holy Supper; and the invocation of departed saints. But their modes of accounting for these abuses, though extremely probable, can no more be proved to the satisfaction of an opponent, than my conjecture relative to Sunday.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the Commencement and Termination of the Scriptural Weekly Sabbath.*

It has already been noticed, that in England, between the time of Edgar (before the Norman conquest) and the reign of King John, that is, for more than 200 years, the weekly sabbath began

at three o'clock on the seventh day afternoon, and continued till twelve o'clock on Sunday night. [See Rapin's History of the Church.] In Scotland, during a part at least of this period, in the reign of William the Lion, cotemporary with Henry the Second of England, the sabbath ended at the same time that it did here: but it began earlier, namely, at twelve o'clock at noon, on the seventh day. [See Morer, *p.* 290.] With these exceptions, so far as I know, all Christians who observed the first day have ever included it between the seventh day at midnight and the midnight following.

The Sabbatarians begin and end their sabbath differently; observing it from the evening of Friday, till the evening of the day following. They do not agree with the modern Jews in this point, if what is reported of them be true, that they keep their sabbath from six on the former of these evenings, till six on the latter of them.

I propose to make a few remarks on the arguments adduced by the different parties in favour of their respective practices. Whatever reason our English ancestors and the Scots had for commencing their sabbath so many hours before the time of its present beginning—whether it was a relic of the ancient practice among Christians in general till the fourth century of keeping the seventh day, as well as the first day, or whether

the extraordinary hours were intended to be employed in preparing for the sabbath rather than to be a part of it, it is now agreed by all, I believe, who think the seventh day sabbath is repealed, that the custom has no foundation in Scripture.

I proceed to examine the grounds for the general practice among Christians for keeping the sabbath from midnight to midnight. The cause must be looked for, I suppose, in the civil mode of reckoning the beginning and ending of the days among the Jews and in the time of the apostles, which appears to be the same as that used chiefly in the civilized world at the present time. Thus in John, chap. 20. what is called the evening of the first day when Christ visited his disciples who were assembled together, was precisely the portion of time that would now be called the Sunday evening. At first view, therefore, it would seem that the observer of the first day acted rightly in beginning and ending his sabbath at the times when, according to the civil account, Sunday is reckoned to begin and end. If, however, the seventh day sabbath was reckoned by the divine command from evening to evening, and if this time of keeping it was founded not on any custom peculiar to the Jews, or on the ceremonial law, but on the order in which it pleased the Blessed God to reckon the parts of the natu-



ral day at the creation, it will then be for the person who keeps the first day, as being substituted by the divine command for the seventh, to consider whether his sabbath should not be kept in like manner from evening to evening, that is, from the evening of the seventh, till the evening of the first day.

But Dr. Wallis does not accede to either of these sentiments. He denies that the Jews did keep the sabbath from the Friday to the seventh day evening. He denies also that the divine command required them so to keep it, whether it be taken from the passage 'from evening to evening ye shall celebrate my sabbaths,' or from the account given by Moses of the day at the creation. He will have it, that the term *evening* signifies midnight.

I do not agree with him in either of his assertions. The first of them, namely, that the Jews did not keep the sabbath partly on Friday and partly on the seventh day, according to the civil reckoning, is founded on the narratives of the evangelists relative to the interval between our Lord's expiring on the cross, and the first visit paid to his sepulchre by the women on the morning of the first day. Dr. Wallis thinks that the women had not time to prepare their spices after the body of our Lord was taken down from the cross and laid in the sepulchre, without trenching

on the sacred season, if the sabbath commenced as soon as it became dark. He also thinks that the expression, 'in the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,' implies that the sabbath did not end till just before day-break, if not broad day-light, the next morning. But though one of the evangelists says 'the evening was come' before Joseph went to Pilate, the phrase might not be intended to be understood literally, as if day-light was quite gone; but as when we speak of taking a walk in the evening; neither is it likely that the application to Pilate was delayed so long after three o'clock, when our Lord died—indeed it was so soon after his death, that doubts were entertained whether he was really dead: so that there was abundance of time afterwards, at that season of the year, for the women to perform the benevolent but secular act recorded of them, before it was dark. As to the sabbath seeming to have ended just before day-break the next morning, in that case the sabbath must have continued much longer than midnight on the seventh day evening, and consequently long beyond the time that Dr. Wallis himself assigns for its termination. But the evangelist does not say how long the sabbath was past, but only that it was past; and the visit not having been paid the evening before, might

be owing to a cause very different from the continuance of the sabbath.

Dr. Wallis's opinion, therefore, that the Jews kept the sabbath from midnight to midnight, receives not that support from the narratives just considered, which he thinks it does. Nor is he more correct in his judgment concerning the meaning of the expressions 'from evening to evening,' and 'the evening and the morning were &c.' They do not signify from twelve o'clock one night to twelve o'clock the next night after. The account of the first Passover is the only authentic illustration given us of the sense in which the former of these phrases is to be understood; and this mentions many acts that would occupy much time prior to midnight, when the angel of destruction went forth throughout the land of Egypt; such as the choosing the lamb, killing it, sprinkling its blood outside of the house, dressing it, and partaking of it ready equipped for the journey in prospect. With regard to the latter phrase, nothing can be clearer than that in the account of the creation by the inspired writer, the expression evening and morning signifies the dark and light parts of the twenty-four hours, the former of which begins several hours before midnight, and the latter as many hours after midnight. The middle of a thing, and consequently

of night, never can be its beginning, any more than its end.

As a Sabbatarian, therefore, being of opinion that the seventh day sabbath continues in force, and that it is inseparable from the Fourth Commandment, I keep it as the Jews were ordered to keep it; that is, from the commencement of darkness on the sixth day, to the termination of light on the seventh day. I do not agree with the modern Jews, if they keep it all the year round from six o'clock in the afternoon on one day, to the same hour in the afternoon on the day following. This may or may not be from evening to evening. Lawful as it may be in estimating the natural day to alter in various forms the original order of darkness and light on a civil account, it does not appear to me that leave has been granted by the Divine Being to do this respecting the sabbath. The expressions *se'nnight* and *fortnight* in our language, derived from the Saxons, seem to me to be remains of the custom introduced by the Divine Being himself at the creation, of reckoning the darkness before the light in the account of a day, which the dark division and the light division, added together, compose. The Saxons appear to have deriyed it from tradition; as they did also their customs of dividing time into weeks, and of worshipping Satur or Saturn on the seventh day—the deity who, according to the Greek

language, denoted Time. There would be no way of accounting for the expressions alluded to, that were in use among the ancients, if the day had always been reckoned from midnight, as it is at present in the civil account—at least in many countries.

Mr. Wright, whom I have mentioned before, thinks that Moses took his estimate of the natural day from the Egyptians, who began their account of it in the evening. I think it far more probable, on the contrary, that the Egyptians derived their custom by tradition from what passed and was introduced at the creation. It is not very likely, nor very consistent with the sacred character and dignity of Revelation, that Moses, an inspired writer, however ‘learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,’ would in his account of what happened before the existence of any nation, be guided and influenced by the opinion and custom of a particular nation, and one that was no less idolatrous, than hostile to himself and his countrymen. The same writer notices that there are nations who begin their account of the day neither in the evening at the commencement of darkness, nor at midnight, but at noon. I do not see how this observation ought to affect the question when the sabbath should commence, any more than that of the possibility of confining the sabbath itself by a divine institution to a par-



ticular day of the week for mankind in general, whether the day be the seventh or the first. Our first parents certainly knew on what day of the week they were created, whether they came into being in the dark or in the light part of it. They knew that those parts composed the whole day, and probably knew not at first any other divisions, or any subdivisions of it. They doubtless knew the first sabbath, and that it was sanctified or set apart for them to devote to God, not because they, but because God had worked the six preceding days. They knew also when the seventh day came again which was to be their second sabbath, and which they were to keep, not because they had worked the six preceding days, but because, whether they had done so or not, it was the weekly return of the first sabbath. Thus they themselves could neither be ignorant, nor forget, without incurring guilt, either the day that was to be sanctified, or its commencement, which was the commencement of darkness the day before, according to the civil account: neither were they at liberty to transfer the sabbath to a different day, by the expedient of keeping two sabbaths together, and working six days afterwards; and yet if they could not, where is the propriety of saying, as Mr. W. does, that the seventh part of time only was instituted?

The observations just made relative to the day

kept by our first parents, and the time when it began, apply to their posterity while they lived on or near the same spot with them. Nor would emigration to the east or west make any difference with regard to their keeping the day, which was the seventh, except they lost their reckoning; and it would be their own gross fault if they did. As to the time of beginning their sabbath, it would be their duty to begin it when darkness began to usher it in at the place where they were; whatever might be the state of some other people at that moment with respect to light and darkness. Supposing even any of the nations to have lost their reckoning of days, there is every reason to believe, as already shown, that the ancient Patriarchs and the Jews did not lose their's, and that their's is the source of, or at least was the same with, that which is prevalent among the modern Jews and among Christians. The time when a nation chooses to begin its civil day, whether midnight, noon, or any other, need not, and ought not, to affect the Scriptural sabbath day, nor the time of its commencement.

Mr. Wright thinks, with some others, that the three first days of the first week differed from the four following days, and perhaps from each other, in length, because it was the fourth day before the sun was made. I know not what purpose is to be answered by the hypothesis, except it be to

show that the successive seventh days had shorter or longer intervals of time between them than existed between the beginning of the first day and the first sabbath, and that therefore there could be no institution at the close of the creation that confined the sabbath to a particular day of the week. But the ground of this conjecture fails. It was as easy for the Great Creator to make each of the three first days, consisting of darkness and light, of the same length as that of any day that followed, without the sun, as with the sun; and as the three first as well as the four last are called *days*, there is no doubt that he did.

Once more:—Mr. Wright, as well as Dr. Wallis, speaks of the uncertainty respecting the time of day when the sun made his appearance for the first time; that is, I suppose they mean, it is uncertain whether it was noon at the time in Paradise, the sun being on the meridian of that place, or whether it was there at what is now called sun-rising or sun-setting, or at any time between. Be it which it might, there is no reason why it should affect the time of the commencement, continuance, or termination of the light and darkness which existed during the three preceding days, any more than it would, had the sun been only behind a cloud during the whole of the enlightened part of those days. All the difference would

be this, that what existed before without any division, or distinction of names, perhaps without any to be named, except those of darkness and light, would henceforth consist of night, midnight, morning twilight, sun-rise, forenoon, noon, afternoon, and evening twilight, though it is uncertain which of these the meridian of Paradise had when the sun appeared in the sky for the first time.\*

\* Had there been any people to the east or west of Paradise at the time the sun was 'made,' the darkness which had hitherto marked the beginning of a new day, and of a sabbath, would have happened at the same time that it would have taken place if there had been no sun, however differently they might have named the hour if the different civil accounts of days now existing had been then established. The times, indeed, in which darkness would take place in these opposite directions, could not of course correspond with the moment of time at which it would take place in Paradise, on account of the difference of meridians. But it would be the business of each to regard the time of its happening in the country where he lived, unmindful whether it took place sooner or later, and how long, (supposing him to know,) in another, with which he would have nothing to do till he removed to that country, any more than the man has, who has obligations to fulfil on a particular day of the month towards one who lives in a remote part, east or west. This is all the difference that could happen to the descendants of the first human pair, without their own fault, in removing from Paradise; and it furnishes no excuse for changing the original order of the day, or the original time for commencing the

sabbath, whatever civil account of a day's commencement may have been instituted in a particular country. I do not, therefore, agree with Mr. Wright in the Note on p. 10 of the Work already referred to, if he means that the ancients and moderns under different meridians might keep the sabbath on what day of the week they pleased, and begin it when they pleased.

If the reader should think that either here or elsewhere I have entered into discussions too minute or profound, I request him to recollect, that I am not the appellant, but the respondent.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the supposed Lawfulness of Man to transfer the Scriptural Weekly Sabbath to another Day.*

STRANGE as the idea may seem, at first view, that God would under any circumstances permit his laws to be dispensed with by his creatures, there are many who act as if they thought he would do this, and some, I believe, that really think he will, whether they venture to say so or not. All those who refuse to search the Scriptures on the subject, though they are totally unacquainted with the argument, or who, though they are secretly and sometimes avowedly convinced that God has appointed a certain day to



be kept, live in the habit of substituting another for it, appear to me to act upon the principle just mentioned. With regard to supposing any persons to think so who do not distinctly avow the sentiment, unjust as it may seem, at first view, to affirm this of them, it is not unjust to attribute an opinion to one who avows it virtually, though not explicitly. What other judgment can be formed, for instance, of Dr. Wallis's sentiment, who first takes pains in the usual way to prove the sanctification of the first day obligatory upon Christians by divine authority, and afterwards endeavours to show that no particular day can be thus binding upon all men, because on various accounts they cannot all keep it at the same moment of absolute time, or know for certain that it is the weekly return of the resurrection-day, and professes his willingness to keep as a *sabbath* the day that the nation appoints, be it what day it may?

Reluctant, however, as individuals may feel to avow an opinion which evidently manifests such irreverence of the Deity as that of supposing that he would allow a Scriptural sabbath to be dispensed with by any one, there are not wanting excuses for entertaining it. The Divine Being allowed the Jews, by means of Moses, to put away their wives, though 'from the beginning it was not so;' and if he dispenses with his law in one instance, why should he not, it is asked, in

another? But it does not follow, because he allows an inspired person to do this, that he will allow an uninspired person to do it.

Again:—it is urged that the Blessed God ‘will have mercy, and not sacrifice.’ But this passage of Scripture does not mean that he would dispense with offering sacrifice, when it did not interfere with the exercise of benevolence: neither does our Lord’s application of it to the case of his disciples, when on the sabbath day they plucked the ears of corn, and ate to appease their hunger, imply that the observance of the sabbath may be dispensed with in favour of works that are required neither by necessity nor mercy. Whether such works ever exist, will be seen in the course of the Chapter.

There are, however, reasons assigned for the credibility of the Divine Being’s willingness to dispense with his law in the case of the Scriptural sabbath, which will require a more particular examination. It has been urged, that as one day is as good as another for the weekly sabbath, provided it be after six days’ labour, it cannot be a material object to the Deity what day is kept, even if he has appointed a day in particular, so that one be kept. But if it was so immaterial to him which day of the week was sanctified, why did he fix on one in particular for sanctification? Why did he not leave it to man to sanctify which

of the seven he pleased? Some, indeed, are of opinion that he actually has done so. Whether or no that be the fact, may be collected from the foregoing Chapters.\* At present, I suppose my opponents to admit that there is a Scriptural sabbath. To them I answer, then, that indifferent as it may appear to man which of the seven days in the week be kept, provided one be kept, it may not appear so to the Deity. It evidently does not appear so to him, not only by his appointing one in particular, but by his assigning a reason for it. He appointed the seventh day originally, because on that day he rested after the creation.

\* It does not follow that God means the seventh part of time to continue sacred, on account of his having once consecrated a particular day. Had that been his design, he would either have continued the day, or substituted another for it. It is incredible that he should first appoint the day himself, and afterwards leave it to be appointed by man. A day of his appointment would surely answer the purpose as well as any day of human appointment, and could as easily be kept by man. It does not follow, from the possibility of man's changing God's day through accident or design, that God will acquiesce in the error. It was as easy for God to have instituted one day in seven generally, as to have named a particular day; and he would no doubt have done so, had that been all which he intended. Nations might have concurred in any day, as they do now, if God did not prescribe a particular one.

He appointed the first day, (according to the general opinion, though not that of the Sabbatharians,) because our Lord rose from the dead on it. Neither of these reasons is transferable to another day; and therefore as another day would be improper for commemorating either of those events, however proper it might be in itself for answering moral and religious purposes, it is not likely that he would sanction the change. Yet without his favour and blessing, it cannot reasonably be expected that the mere suitableness of a day to a purpose, especially of so exalted and difficult a nature as that of religious benefit, would with human skill and endeavour be available to that purpose, in the absence of divine power effectually concurring, or that it would be granted in such a case as I have supposed. If the degree of success that it seems warranted to expect on a Scriptural sabbath, should without warrant for such expectation attend the day, it would no more prove that the Divine Being authorizes it, or that he will ultimately bless it, than the prosperity of the wicked proves that God loves them, or than the extensive spread of Popery for many ages, proves that the Reformation was either unnecessary or improper. The utmost that the success of the day would prove is, that the regard due to the day of God's appointment was not so predominating a consideration

with him, as that he should, for a while at least, not suffer the tendency of leisure afforded weekly for waiting upon him, and of embracing that leisure, though to the neglect of a divine institution, to fail of its natural effect, or that he should deviate from the usual course of providence, in order to transfer the circumstances which possess this tendency to his own day. But no conscientious seeker after divine truth, or observer of it in small things\* as well as in great ones, can on this account think that the Divine Being is himself willing to dispense with, or that another should dispense with, any of his laws.

The reader will easily perceive, that I allude to the long and widely-extended course of spiritual prosperity which has accompanied the observance of the first day. I certainly think it possible that such prosperity might exist, notwithstanding many who kept the day were conscious that they neglected the Scriptural sabbath, as appears from their own confessions, and notwithstanding there are numbers more, who, though they have opportunity for seeing the light, if they choose, yet come not to it. If, then, the prosperity just men-

\* The expressions, 'Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good : ' ' Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind : ' and ' Whatsoever is not of faith is sin ; ' refer to no authority exclusively.



tioned may exist under such circumstances, how much more may it exist, where the observer of the first day, after honest inquiry, thinks that he is in the right, whether he be really so or not, or where suspicion has never been awakened by suggestions to the contrary? There can be no doubt that there are instances of both these cases, and that those belonging to the last case are very numerous.

Spiritual prosperity attending a different day, therefore, from that which may or may not, in the opinion of the observer, or only in his opinion, be the Scriptural sabbath, affords no proof that the Divine Being sanctions it.

Were the first and seventh days to exchange situations relative to human policy, their success would most probably be reversed with their situations, though their state with respect to the Scriptures would remain just the same. No Protestant thinks that Popery and Protestantism are alike approved of by the Deity, on account of the immense number of instances in which Roman Catholics were doubtless converted and edified, during ages of involuntary ignorance and of mistaken conviction, though cases of wilful disobedience to the truth were far from being wanting.\*

\* Were the contrary sentiment just, the necessity for in-

But the strongest argument in favour of a power lodged with man of dispensing with a divine law remains to be considered. It has been asked, Supposing a day to have been appointed by the Legislature for consecration in a particular country—ought not that appointment, if it does not dictate the sense of Scripture, at least to warrant a departure from that sense by the country and by individuals in it, especially when the appointment is no other than that which has long prevailed and still prevails in every country where the divine authority of the Scriptures is acknowledged?

The question to be answered is of peculiar hazard: but I feel confident that it will admit of an answer consistent not only with conscientiousness, but with loyalty and obedience to the laws, with the love of peace, with attention to social order, with respect for public opinion, and with esteem for the truly pious of every description. I begin, then, with asserting, that though the laws of the country and of Christendom order the first day in every way to be kept to that extent which human wisdom and power can take cognizance of and

quiring into the will of God respecting the non-essentials of religion would be superseded. It would be merely requisite to consider which description of religious people had the greatest number of the truly pious in it.

enforce, they nowhere pretend, in this nation at least, to interfere with the right of individuals to determine the sense of Scripture for themselves, and to act upon it so far as is compatible with the rights of others—particularly those of the public. Whatever claim the National Church may make to the power of ‘decreeing rites and ceremonies, and to authority in matters of faith,’ it expressly specifies that its determinations are not to be contrary to the word of God; nor does it assume a right to decide in what cases such a repugnancy takes place in opposition to the rights of private judgment. In the ‘late Toleration Act, [A. D. 1812,] which reflects such honour upon the Legislature, the Government, and all who were concerned in drawing it up and in contributing to its passing through the two Houses of Parliament, the utmost attention is shown to that solemn declaration of the apostle, a declaration of universal concern, ‘Every one of us must give account of himself to God.’

I shall not now show the consistence of holding and acting upon this principle, in determining the Scriptural sabbath and observing it each one for himself, with obedience to the laws, and with deference to public opinion. There will be occasion to discuss this topic in the course of the next Chapter. In the mean time I request leave to avow my fullest and firmest conviction of their

perfect consistency; and I add, with respect to the practical effect of it on the part of the Sabbatharians, notwithstanding the repeated convictions of transgressing the law relative to the first day by professed observers of it, there has not been a single instance for these fifty years at least of a Sabbatharian being charged with the same offence, whatever privations and disadvantages he is required to labour under.

To proceed.—It certainly does not follow that the nations of Christendom, or that this nation in particular, mistake the day they should keep as the weekly sabbath, because some in a country are of that opinion. But supposing, for a moment, that this nation, for instance, were to discover itself to be in an error in this respect, would the nation be justified in thinking that it might dispense with what, upon the present supposition, it deems to be the law of God? With all proper respect for my native country, I feel myself compelled to reply, that I do not consider a nation as possessing a license wilfully to transgress a command of God under any circumstances whatever. Happily, my country is in no such predicament. It does not profess to believe that the Scriptural sabbath day is different from the day it observes; even if it did think that the first day was no sabbath by divine appointment. For except in the case relative to the restraint

laid upon the Sabbatarians on the first day, (which, whether it be right or not, it is the duty of the Sabbatarians to submit to,) I am not aware that the country has enacted any thing relative to that day which is at all contrary to Scripture, as I propose to show in the next Chapter. It does not appear to me that the country would be chargeable with the sin before mentioned, except it were to forbid or to neglect the observance of the seventh day in opposition to conviction that this day was still the weekly sabbath by divine authority.

It may be asked, however, whether the country would not be warranted, were the case last mentioned ever to be realized, in acting contrary to its conviction, in order to shun the serious inconvenience, either of keeping two sabbaths, or of effecting a transfer which would materially interfere with the habits of private individuals and families, the transactions of one part of the country with another, and the intercourse subsisting between this nation and foreign nations. I answer, that it is not very probable that the conviction supposed will take place soon, if ever; and that it will be time enough for the country to consider what it would be its duty to do in such a case, when the case occurs. But if a reply is required for the sake of argument, I confess that it strikes me, that any inconvenience ought to be submit-



ted to, rather than that the law of God should be wilfully neglected or violated; and that God would in the end cause the good arising from self-denial to exceed the evil. In my opinion, the observance of the seventh day could not possibly be dispensed with by the nation in the case just stated. With respect to the regard at present paid by it to the first day, I shall have occasion to show that the utmost regard which a nation is able to take cognizance of or to enforce, even in the case of a single individual, falls far short—infinitely short—of that regard which, according to the First Chapter of this Work, is included in the Scriptural notion of sanctifying the weekly sabbath. If, however, the regard claimed by the law of the land for the first day, uncommensurate as it is to sanctification according to the Scriptures, sufficiently interrupts the course of business and pleasure through the nation, to merit the name of sanctification, I do not see how the nation, in the state of mind supposed, could avoid either transferring the interruption to another day, or submitting to a similar one on that day, without gross injury to piety. It was not the Divine Being who brought the nation into the dilemma here supposed. The seventh day, which the nation is now supposed to consider as still the Scriptural sabbath, is as well adapted in itself to the exercise and improvement of devotion, of

practical piety, and of morality, as the first day. It is true, he permitted the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Christian Church to associate the first day with the seventh in observing the weekly sabbath, as also the Emperor Constantine (who probably wished to gratify Rome and Alexandria, which were hostile to the seventh day, and who acted under the influence of Pope Sylvester) to confine by several edicts the weekly sabbath to the first day, in opposition to the sense and practice of the Christian Church before his time, and without so much as calling a council on the occasion : but the divine permission of evil (if it be evil) is no excuse either for its introduction or its continuance.

I am supposing, I repeat, the mass of the different orders of people in the country, and particularly those in whom the elective franchise is legally invested, the Legislature, and the Government, to feel a conviction which it is not likely that they will feel—namely, that the day which the nation sanctifies is different from that which the Scriptures have appointed to be sanctified. In that case I have affirmed that there would be no occasion for the country, except it chose, to alter the laws relative to Sunday ; though the obligation to keep the other day would be indispensably necessary on a religious ground. The inconvenience which individuals and families

at large would sustain, are no other than those which the Sabbatarian individuals and families have uniformly experienced since the indiscriminate prohibition of secular employment in an external and public manner, and that in times and places when there was a considerable number of them.\* But if the inconveniences attending such a partial regard would appear intolerable to the nation, were it called upon to feel them in consequence of sanctifying, from a sense of religious obligation, a different day for the sabbath, the total abandonment of religious regard for the first day which would be requisite to shun them, however great and widely extended the change, it

\* The convenience and benefits resulting to a country from its inhabitants keeping the same day for the weekly sabbath, cannot confer a right on the nation to disregard a day which in its own opinion the Scriptures may have enjoined. The nation might have had the advantages referred to by keeping that day, as well as by keeping another. The Divine Being is under no obligation to alter his law, in order to continue the advantages to the nation, that is now supposed to be convinced of having unhappily fallen into the error of keeping a wrong day, and that finds it extremely inconvenient to transfer its regard to the right one: especially as it is at liberty to continue sanctifying the wrong day as much as it has it in its power to enforce the sanctification of any day, and as much as is sufficient to answer every end it can propose to itself, whether it thinks proper to keep the right one in addition, or not.

would not be so totally unparalleled in history, as to furnish it with an excuse for supposing it lawful to prevent the occasion for this change, by wilfully disregarding a divine law. I will not plead the conduct of Revolutionary France, when it substituted its impious *decad* for the week which mankind received from the Deity at the creation, thus transferring the national sabbath to a different day, though it remained uncertain for several years whether the course of events would not have given permanency to the change, notwithstanding the serious inconvenience it brought upon the whole of France, and upon certain other countries that had been conquered and enslaved by the French Republic. No—the Sabbatarian was not the least forward of his Majesty's subjects, when he heard of the success of the British hero, in conjunction with that of the allies, and of its happy consequences, to exclaim, with admiration, joy, and gratitude, 'What hath God wrought!' I wish for no change, either about the day for the weekly sabbath, or for any thing else, to be effected by revolutionary means—by any coercive power acting upon the Legislature or upon the Government. The historical instances I allude to in which a nation has sacrificed convenience to a sense of duty, are those which took place at the alteration of the style, and above all when the Reformation was substituted for Popery,

as the national religion, in different countries. No one can doubt that this last mentioned change must have caused alterations in domestic economy, in different branches of the home trade, in foreign commerce, in the system of public devotion, and more especially in the state of various religious bodies, that were sorely felt by multitudes for many years.

Let it not be said, that there is an incomparable difference between a nation's submitting to inconvenience for conscience sake in a case of error so gross, complicated, and widely extended as that of the Roman Catholic religion, and in the case of error in a single point, supposing it to be convinced that the day appointed in Scripture to be the weekly sabbath has been unhappily mistaken. I submit, however, that the latter error, were it really one, would not be a trivial one. Can any one imagine that a pious Jew, and much less Jehovah himself, would have accounted such an error a trifle, had the whole nation in Judea, or afterwards when resident in many other countries as well as in Judea, substituted another day for the seventh day? Would the presumptuous transgression of the Fourth Commandment by one who believed in his conscience that the expression in the commandment, '*seventh day*,' always and still means exclusively the day commonly called Saturday, and yet did not keep it,



appear to be a trifle to any real Christian? Or would any observer of the first day, who is anxious for its being sanctified by others that acknowledge the divinity of its claim, be satisfied with their sanctifying Monday in the stead of it? The error of neglecting the Scriptural sabbath, if the country believed itself to be in an error of that kind, would not be more venerable or venial than Popery, on the ground of antiquity and universality, being very little if at all more ancient than the religious errors of Popery, according to Justin Martyr and Tertullian, and not a jot more extensive than those once were. Nor do these errors relate to the essence of religion, any more than an error relative to the Scriptural sabbath does. For with all the absurdity, superstition, and idolatry, that attached to the Roman Catholic religion at the time of the Reformation, there was still a considerable mixture of truth in its creed, of propriety in its observances, and of genuine piety in the devotion, spirit, and manners, of many of its votaries. Yet other nations, as well as our's thought proper, (and justly so,) upon conviction, to exchange it for Protestantism, notwithstanding the serious inconvenience of the measure. The holy matter connected with the supposed error under consideration is far greater certainly than in the former case: still, if the frequent violation of the Fourth Command-

ment were wilful and national, the sin would be far too great and extensive to dispense with forsaking it for fear of inconvenience, even were a nation justified in dispensing with obedience to the law of God in any instance whatsoever.\*

But, as was said before, the nation is not at present convinced that it is dispensing with the divine law in this particular, if it ever will be of this opinion. It only remains to be considered, therefore, whether individuals who are Sabbatarians in judgment, or those who 'hate the light, neither come to the light,' lest they should prove such, may dispense with conforming to the dictates of conscience on the ground of the serious inconveniences they would sustain in consequence of differing from the national practice. Though it may appear self-evident that if the rights of conscience cannot be dispensed with by a country, much less can they be so by an individual or even a family, yet it will be proper for me to make some remarks.

I wish to premise, that in the remarks I am about to make, I am not addressing those who upon just grounds are convinced that the day they observe weekly is the Scriptural sabbath,

\* The enactment and infliction of punishment for sabbath-breaking would come with an ill grace from a nation so situated.

whatsoever day it be. I say upon *just* grounds; because I do not consider their having been bred to it; their relations, friends, and connexions, being of that way of thinking; the countenance and example of the pious at large, as well as of the nation, being on that side; and, in short, not only their worldly, but also their religious comfort and advantage being most promoted by it;—I repeat, I do not consider these, if they are the only grounds, to be just ones for the conviction in question. No one can be said to be truly convinced, who is not conscious to himself that he has carefully examined the word of God on the subject, praying earnestly to be led into the truth, and for grace to withstand the powerful prejudices which naturally arise from the circumstances just enumerated; as also that he is ready to treat with candour and consideration whatever may be suggested on the contrary side. It is not easy to answer to the character I have been describing, whether the party be a Sabbatarian, or differently minded. I am, however, far from supposing that my opponent, whoever he may be, does not answer to it. I only say, that if he does, he is not concerned in the remarks that follow.

I address those only who are convinced that they do not keep that which they think is, or which may be, for aught they know, God's day. Let them belong to what religious body, or move

in whatsoever sphere, they may, I affirm, that no worldly or religious inconveniences can warrant their dispensing with obedience to a command of God. Here I shall be reminded, no doubt, in the case of a Sabbatarian in principle only, of the inroads made by my doctrine on the order and peace of families every week—of the difficulties attending in this case the training up and providing for children—of the obstacles thrown in the way of acquiring or retaining respectability and affluence—of the detriment occasioned to the wealth and prosperity of the country—the injury suffered by the poor on account of diminishing so considerably the number and resources of their employers—and, finally, the very great reduction that would take place respecting the means of promoting charitable and pious objects. The picture certainly contains no small portion of the sombre and the terrific, but not more of it than that drawn by our Lord when he tells the multitude that the effect of his gospel would be to excite dissension in private families, to make the nearest and dearest relations hate one another, to occasion to believers the loss of all things, and to send a sword upon the earth. Are these ideas antiquated?—Not wholly so: for I verily believe that even in the present times and country, whoever will ‘live godly in Christ Jesus,’ and in all good conscience toward God as well as toward

men, must suffer persecution many ways, with respect both to the acquisition of fortune or honours, and enjoying them—even members of the Establishment, as well as Sabbatarians. Let it not be said, that however Christ may require such serious privations and sufferings for the sake of essentials in religion, it is incredible that he should require them for a non-essential. The Lollards did not think so in the time of Henry the Fourth, nor did the Protestants think so in the reign of Mary II.; and yet, important as the questions undoubtedly were between them and the Papists, no one, I suppose, will deny that there are truly godly people, and ‘heirs of salvation,’ among the Roman Catholics.\*

The idea, therefore, that God will dispense with his law for the sake of domestic convenience, worldly aggrandizement, or riches, must not be endured for a moment. Let the pious, in forming matrimonial and other connexions, provide for their spiritual as well as for their temporal interests. Let the ruling members of families

\* The Protestant Dissenter cannot but recollect, that in times less liberal than the present, his ancestors submitted to evils little short of those that have been glanced at, though the points of difference between them and the Establishment were far less important than those between the Protestants and the Papists.



choose only such domestics as will be willing to accommodate them for conscience sake. Let them remember, that Christians are to let their 'moderation be known unto all men,' and not to 'seek great things for themselves.' If it be 'righteousness that exalteth a nation,' the people must take no measure to exalt it which implies unrighteousness. There are always too many who are ready to serve their country and the poor, regardless of a religious motive, to make it necessary for any to serve them at the expense of a good conscience. Piety itself ought not to be promoted by any act or neglect that is unsuitable to piety.\*

If the Divine Being could be supposed willing to dispense with his law relative to the sabbath in any case, it would be in the case of the pious in the lower classes of life. Individuals in these classes want for themselves and their families not

\* The evil of dispensing with the law of God relative to the sabbath would be peculiarly great in the case of a Sabbatarian in principle who is 'rich in this world;' because his example, encouragement, and support, on the contrary side, would tend greatly to prevent or remove the excuse for dispensing with it in regard to his inferiors. All, therefore, that duty allows him is, the same leisure for effecting the requisite changes in this case, that is not unfrequently wanted for making alterations with a view to some considerable object of a worldly nature.

great and splendid things, but conveniences bordering on necessities—perhaps really such. They would ‘learn and labour truly to get their own living,’ provided they could but live. If they want any thing further, it is to give their children a common education, and to fit them for such employments as may enable them to make provision for their own subsistence when grown up, or to meet the probable contingencies of a declining business, of sickness, and of old age. I have known various instances in which the apprehended impossibility of accomplishing these moderate and reasonable objects, has proved the unhappy occasion of not adopting or of abandoning the day which was verily believed to be the Scriptural sabbath. I cannot, however, approve of such conduct. Whether the Legislature would think it proper, upon application, to allow the Sabbatarians thus circumstanced to work ‘six days,’ agreeably to the Fourth Commandment, I know not. But should the proposal not be acceded to on public grounds, I do not think that the case, extreme as it is, would authorize a Sabbatarian in principle, on account of it, to neglect or violate the dictates of his conscience. Works of necessity, indeed, are, according to our Lord, allowed on the sabbath by the Commandment. He must not suffer either himself or his family to starve: but he

must not, on the other hand, neglect to seek after and to embrace the earliest opportunity that presents itself of keeping holy the day that he believes to be God's sabbath, without regarding how mean, laborious, or scantily productive, the employment may be that is offered to him, provided he can live, and live honestly by it. Industry, frugality, patience, and contentment, are seldom wholly unaccompanied by genius, ability, and favourable situations for exerting them, in one way or in another. If one mode of life is inaccessible, or fails, another may be discovered. The conscientious, and those who 'suffer for righteousness sake,' are not the class of people which Providence may be the least expected to bless.

Such are the reasons for which I think that no case of worldly inconvenience can excuse any one for withholding obedience to, or withdrawing it from, what in his opinion is the divine will relative to the sabbath. I have stated the very worst that can happen, and which I know to be the principal occasion of the very low state in which the Sabbatarians of Europe are at present—a state by no means the most favourable to proper inquiry into the will of God respecting the circumstantialia of religion, and conforming to it in opposition to secular convenience and interest. I must, however,

observe, that adverse as the principle of the Sabbatarians under their present circumstances is to prosperity in the world, there are not wanting instances of rich inheritances and valuable endowments among the Sabbatarians, any more than among other bodies of religious people.

It only remains to be noticed, that no religious disadvantages attending compliance with a duty, or adhering to it, can supersede the obligation to regard it. The Sabbatarian in judgment may possibly find no multitude who 'keep holy day,' and whom he may accompany to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise. He may see little more around him at a place of worship on the seventh day than a dreary solitude. He may hear the word addressed to almost empty benches, and may see little prospect of an increase, with regard either to audience or members. Notwithstanding, however, all these discouragements that attend the discharge of duty in the present instance, a man is not to be personally irreligious in order to enjoy the comforts of social religion. It is better to be in this forlorn state with an approving conscience, than to exchange it for union with the 'great congregation' which, free as it may be from any cause for self-reproach itself, cannot exempt from it any one that has cause for it. The general prevalence of an

opinion has no authority to supersede the opposite conviction of a single individual. The situation of the patriarch Noah with respect to fellowship in religion was far worse, and that of the prophet Elijah not much better, than the one under consideration. He who would possess evidence that he regards religion itself rather than its appendages, must learn to enjoy it not only when those appendages give it pomp and splendour, but when they are scarcely sufficient to bestow comeliness and dignity upon it. If the King of kings deigns to lift up the light of his countenance upon a few in public worship, and pours joy into their hearts, the uninviting if not revolting appearance of the place and of the people will be a matter of comparative insignificance. He will soon terminate the inconvenience, by removing them to the general assembly and church of the first-born. Let it be recollected, that he has sanctified and blessed the day of his own choice, and that he ‘meeteth every one that worketh righteousness, and rejoiceth in his ways.’

In fine, I may remark, that there are parts of the world where no extraordinary temporal or spiritual disadvantages attend the conscientious observer of the seventh day, and also that there have been times when that was the case in this



country : nor can any one tell that it may not at a future period be so again.\*

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *Differences of Opinion concerning the supposed Authority of Man to institute a Weekly Sabbath.*

‘ONE man,’ observes the apostle Paul, ‘esteems one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike : let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord ; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.’—No one who thinks that there is a Scriptural sabbath, whether he considers it to be the seventh or the first day, or even the seventh part of time abstractedly, without reference to any particular day, can suppose that this celebrated passage relates to the weekly sabbath, as well as to any other day ; because the inspired writer of it no

\* As no circumstances whatever can warrant any one’s dispensing with what he believes to be a divine law, so neither have they a right to influence his judgment of the law itself.

more censures him who keeps no day, than him who keeps a day—except indeed he thinks that keeping no sabbath could in no case follow from a man's being 'fully persuaded in his own mind :' but of that every one must be left to judge for himself.

But I believe it to be the general opinion, (and it certainly is mine,) that the words in question no way relate to the weekly sabbath or to the testimony of Scripture about it, but to days respecting which the Scriptures are silent, every one being at full liberty to consult his own judgment and inclination whether he should observe them or not; and if the former, in what way, and to what extent, he pleases. The same liberty is granted respecting animal food that is wholesome, to eat it or not. Every individual, and every society, whether religious or civil, ought to allow and to be allowed this liberty. St. Ignatius, for instance, had a right to call the first day 'Lord's day,' (if he ever did call it so,) to keep it as a religious festival himself, and to recommend it to others, in honour of our Lord's resurrection, without the authority of any apostle, which indeed he never pleads. At the same time, neither he nor any other of the Fathers, nor any of the Councils, nor all of them put together, had any right to enjoin the observance of that day, or of Easter, or of any fast or feast not

commanded in Scripture, upon a single Christian that did not own their supremacy, and was differently minded; or in case of non-compliance to inflict any ecclesiastical censure or penalty upon him.\*

The same might have been said of all the sacred days that have been instituted in the Christian Church since the Roman empire became Christian, if the civil power had not adopted them. However, when that power ceased to sanction any of them, they were of course no longer obligatory upon those who maintained the right of private judgment in opposition to ecclesiastical usurpation and tyranny. Hence the termination in this country of that sacred regard which the black letter days once possessed, and which they still possess wherever the Roman Catholic religion retains its sway.

I come at length to the principal subject of this Chapter, namely, the difference of sentiment among Christians concerning the divine right of the civil power to institute a weekly sabbath. The question is manifestly of uncommon delicacy

\* A Christian community has a right to keep any day to the Lord, and that weekly, which it pleases; but it has no right to make the observance of it as a sabbath a term of church-membership, except it thinks that the observance is enjoined in Scripture.—See Rom. 14. 1, &c.

as well as importance and difficulty. It will require nice discrimination in discussing various parts of it. With proper care, however, I hope that it will not be found impossible to treat it in a manner that may be satisfactory in general to opposite parties. I do not recollect that the case has frequently come under discussion, probably because it has been for the most part supposed either that the day appointed by the civil power for the weekly sabbath coincided with the Scriptural sabbath, if there was one by divine appointment, or necessarily took place of the other, even if there was a difference between them. But a Sabbatarian cannot possibly acquiesce in either of these propositions, without the admission of certain modifications and distinctions.

The ancient Fathers and Councils never, as I have already observed, refer to the New Testament at all in support of the first day, but rest its right to observance solely upon their own opinions, wishes, and authority. The edicts of Constantine and of the other princes, as also the canons of Councils between his time and the Reformation, while Christendom was governed by the Roman Emperors, and after it was divided into separate states, founded their regard for the day entirely upon what had been done by the Christians under the heathen emperors. Most of the

Reformers, too, if not all of them, consider the practice of the primitive Church as the sole ground of the first day's claim; affirming at the same time that the sanctification of it is optional, and that the Church has authority to transfer the weekly sabbath to a different day, or to have two in a week instead of one, if it pleases. The later writers, those in England at least, such as Bishop White, Dr. Wallis, and Mr. Morer, do for the first time urge in favour of observing the first day the passages in the New Testament that have been considered, but show themselves sufficiently distrustful of this evidence to make it appear that they rely chiefly upon the practice of the primitive Church; admitting that what they say concerning Christ's authority and apostolic tradition in support of the first day's claim is only conjecture, though they think it probable.

However, therefore, it may have been thought by the Puritans, and some of their cotemporaries, or may be still thought by many pious individuals both in and out of the Establishment, that the obligation to keep the first day chiefly stands upon the ground of Scripture, I am persuaded that the civil power rests it chiefly on the same ground on which it retains certain fasts and feasts that were observed in the primitive Church. Nor do I wish to dispute the right of human authority thus to exercise itself. On the contrary,



I have already expressed my full conviction of its perfect consistency with Scripture, as well as with reason. A nation has undoubtedly a right, as well as any particular society, or an individual, to keep any day and as many days as it thinks proper or convenient, though not to dispense with its own observance of any day which it may think to be enjoined in Scripture, or to forbid its observance by any of its subjects who may think so.

But it may be asked, Has the nation a right, with the provisos just stated, to impose the day or days it accounts sacred, whether upon Scriptural considerations or otherwise, upon individuals in it who think differently of them, and who conceive themselves to be required by the Deity to consecrate a different day weekly? Here it will be necessary for me to distinguish between one case and another. Were the laws relative to Good Friday or Christmas-day, for instance, to order an extent of observance, though annually, and not weekly, as great as that which it requires on the first day, those of the community who do not belong to the Establishment, might perhaps think them rather unreasonable. If they were to do so, I, however, though a Protestant Dissenter, should think myself bound to obey them, so far as relates to abstinence from public business. Happily, they enjoin little more upon the people

than abstinence from business of that sort on those days, and that chiefly during the time of divine service. With these restrictions it is the duty of all to comply, whatever their private opinions may be about the sacredness of the days detached from the events commemorated on them, since the loss or inconvenience is not greater to one than it is to another.

But the chief point for discussion, is the right of the nation to impose the observance of the day it consecrates weekly, on any who may happen to think themselves called upon by Scripture to keep another day. Here I am obliged to make an important distinction between that degree of sanctification which human authority proposes or has power to enforce, and that regard which the Scriptures mean when they speak of sanctifying the sabbath day. The nation confines the idea (so far as relates to enactment, whatever it may recommend) of keeping the day to the showing it respect in public, or at furthest in the external conduct. The Scriptures, however, require the observance of it likewise in private, and in the thoughts; in conversation, as well as in the actions; in the wakeful hours of night, as well as in the day-time. The laws of man could not take notice of, or enforce by the exaction of penalties, a sanctification of this extent, even if they had a right to impose it.

Without, however, such a sanctification, in my opinion, (and the pious in general, in this country at least, agree with me,) there is, according to the Scripture, no sabbath kept; notwithstanding the day that is merely sanctified according to the requisition of human laws, and their power of enforcement, may be called by that name, and notwithstanding no other except that may be sanctified weekly by it at all. There are, indeed, numbers belonging to the Established Church, and to other religious bodies, who sanctify the first day Scripturally, and not merely so far as to satisfy the laws: but they act upon the idea of human authority enforcing divine authority. They think either that the national day of rest coincides with the Scriptural one, or at least that the Scriptures, contenting themselves with enjoining one day in seven, have invested the legislature and the government of every country with authority to determine the day. They cannot, therefore, do otherwise, consistently with their principles, than annex the additions made by Revelation to the enactments of the civil power respecting sanctification. They are not urged to the opposite conduct by the calls of secular duty; as conscience does not compel them to abstain from it on another day. But this Scriptural enlargement and completion of civil sanctification cannot be expected from those who,

though equally unable to plead the sacrifice of interest on a former day, do not believe that there is any weekly sabbath by divine authority, whether exercised by God himself, or delegated by him, in this particular instance, to the state; and of these I suspect that the number is far from inconsiderable, even among the pious themselves: though they doubt not the repeal of the old sabbath, they by no means feel satisfied that the divinity of a new one, whether generally or particularly, is sufficiently proved. Least of all can it be justly thought that the Sabbatarian, who has already, agreeably to the conviction of his own mind, sanctified, in obedience to the Fourth Commandment, the seventh day which God has appointed, will on another day refrain from worldly thoughts, reading, discourse, or actions, further than the laws of the country profess to take cognizance of, and to enforce.

I feel confident that in thus denying to the civil magistrate, respecting the weekly sabbath, the right and power of Him who alone 'sees in secret and searches the hearts of the children of men,' I shall only appear to withhold from him an authority which he never thought of claiming. With respect to my pious brethren of every description who think differently from me concerning the day that is the Scriptural sabbath, they cannot reasonably wonder or take offence, that I

will not, in my meditations, studies, private pursuits, and conversation, sanctify a day which it does not appear to me that God has sanctified, any further than is compatible with my secular duties; or that I do not in my habitation, retirement, and secret thoughts, treat the first day with more religious respect than they show to the day called Saturday.

What I have further to remark, will, I hope, be received with warm approbation by every member of the community, whether a ruler or a subject, that hears of it. I have already intimated the hardship under which the Sabbatarians labour, who are reduced to the necessity either of violating their consciences, or of working only five days in the week instead of six—a liberty which is allowed by the Fourth Commandment, and enjoined by their fellow Christians of every name. This is a grievance which persons who acknowledge no Scriptural sabbath at all, or at least no day determined by Scripture, have by no means an equal right to complain of: for though they are restrained on the first day from secular labour, when they could exercise it without scruple so far as relates to their own consciences, yet they do not lose more time in a week than the rest of the nation. But this is not the case of the Sabbatarians. Notwithstanding this, while the Legislature thinks proper to extend the restric-



tion to them, they will always think it their duty to be subject to the magistrate in this particular as well as in others, not only for 'wrath sake,' or to avoid his displeasure and vengeance, but also for 'conscience sake.'\*

Having premised these observations, I proceed to avow my full conviction that the degree of sanctification which the civil power requires for the first day, under pain of civil penalties, is no more than it has a right to exact, and that it is the incumbent duty of all its subjects to grant it. Lawful, therefore, as secular pursuits on the first day are for me in a conscientious view, I engage in none that would offend the eye or the ear of a first day observer. I converse on no topic, I transact no business with him, which he would decline were I not present. I will not, indeed, promise to accompany him to a place of public worship as regularly and statedly as I frequent it on the day I keep holy. Whatever the laws of the country may recommend or wish me to do in

\* The non-observance of Sunday, however, according to law, is a civil offence: it is an offence against God only in common with other civil offences, except the offender believes the day to be the Scriptural sabbath, or does not know to the contrary for want of searching the Scriptures. In these two cases alone can he be guilty of the sin of sabbath-breaking.

this respect, they do not enjoin this upon any one since the era of civil and religious liberty. But I can truly say, that when I have occasionally visited a pious first-day family on the first day, I have repeatedly gone with them to their church or to their meeting house; that I have conversed with no member of the family, whether young or old, but upon subjects that either were religious in themselves, or at least received a religious improvement; and that when called upon to take the lead in family prayer, I have poured out my heart before God as fervently for the people and ministers who keep the first day, as ever I did for the Sabbatarians. Often have I preached on the first day, in the course of the day and in the evening too, as the apostle Paul did once to the disciples at Troas, though it never once entered into my mind that in doing this I was giving a pledge that I kept the day myself and expected that every one else would do the same: and though I never ‘broke bread’ with the disciples as Paul did at the time just referred to, yet I have no objection to partake of the Lord’s supper with baptized believers on the first day or on any other day, if they will allow me, and I can spare the time. Nor do I object to comply with the apostle’s contingent and temporary injunction on some of the churches, being ready on the first day, as well as on another, to devote what I can spare of

my property for a religious or benevolent purpose, though it would probably be attended, in my case, with an act which my pious brethren of the first day would perhaps not approve of, notwithstanding it seems naturally if not necessarily immediately to precede the other, and respecting which there is nothing prohibitory or cautionary in the apostolic injunction. Certainly I do not call the first day 'Lord's day' as those do in general who keep it; because if I believed the words Rev. 1. 10. to be the apostle John's words, (which I do not,) and if they do not refer to the last day of the week, which is the only day stated in the New Testament to be sacred, I know not what day is meant by the expression, whether it be Sunday, Thursday, or Friday, or whether it be a week-day or the day of a month; and if I did, I know not whether the whole of the day was to be kept like a sabbath, or only a part, like a religious festival, or a thanksgiving day; or whether, in fine, it was merely a new appellation given to it in honour of the great and happy event which is commonly thought to have given occasion for it. But notwithstanding these objections, I would call the first day 'Lord's day,' instead of Sunday, if the Legislature were to pass an act to that effect.

Whomsoever else, therefore, the respectable 'Society for the Reformation of Manners' may

think it their duty to prosecute for profaning the 'Lord's day,' I suppose that they would not consider me and my Sabbatarian brethren who think and act with me (if they should ever hear of us) obnoxious on that account.

I hope I have fully redeemed the pledge I gave for the truth of my assertion, that though I cannot consider any day as sacred, except that which it appears to me is enjoined by the Fourth Commandment, much less consent to substitute another for it, yet there is nothing in my sentiment or practice that is at all inconsistent with the obedience I owe to the laws of my country. I should not wonder, indeed, if those of the observers of the first day who are most anxious to secure and to promote its sanctification, having become acquainted with the statement just made, were to wish that there were no worse profaners of the national day among the people who acknowledge its divine authority, than there are among the Sabbatarians.

Still my pious opponents will be apt to tell me, that though I take care not to offend the laws, yet my way of thinking puts it out of my power to make those exertions, both by precept and example, in the cause of religion and benevolence, which I might make, were the day I keep the same as that which is kept by the nation. I acknowledge the fact, and lament it: but I must

not do evil that good may come, in a religious any more than in a civil view, for the benefit of others any more than for my own. I could wish, if it pleased God, that it suited a greater number of people to come and hear me, when it suits me to preach : but though more extended means of doing good have been hitherto withheld from me, I endeavour to embrace every opportunity of promoting the cause of the Redeemer, and the best interests of men, both high and low, whatever day it be ; and especially on the day which furnishes me with the best excuse for speaking on a subject that is unhappily not popular, and them with the most leisure for hearing ; and though I have comparatively but few opportunities for ‘teaching publicly and from house to house’ on the first day, would the labours of the preceding day admit of my doing this frequently, yet I have written many a line on that day, which I hope, having issued from the press, may, with the divine blessing, be of service to the souls both of ‘the wise and of the unwise.’

After these explanations, it will not be very difficult for me to reconcile my way of thinking relative to the weekly sabbath with the will of the Legislature on that point. The civil and spiritual interests of mankind require that there should be a weekly sabbath, or God would not have appointed one. But as there is a diversity of senti-



ment concerning the day appointed by Scripture for consecration, it is perhaps necessary for securing both these ends, and for general convenience, that public authority should interfere in the way it does; and it is highly proper that its enactments should be obeyed by all classes of people, whatever may be the opinions of individuals on the question. If permitting the Sabbatarians to work six days be thought materially incompatible with decorum, and with the dignity and the solemnity of public appearance on the first day, or if the rigid and universal observation of these be thought essential to the attainment of the important ends proposed, be it so.\* But any further interference on the part of the country is neither possible, nor wanted for the general convenience, or for the civil and the spiritual interests of its inhabitants. Its sense of Scripture cannot dictate a sense of it to those who are contrary minded. It cannot supersede the sense of Scripture that is in the mind of any of its subjects, or dispense with obedience to that which may appear to be a divine law, either in the case of another, or even its own. It can, in short, plead no authority from Scripture to appoint a

\* Supposing the law to have appointed the seventh day instead of the first, what would the observer of the latter think of a similar restraint?

sabbath binding upon conscience ; or show the credibility of its possessing a right to enact an extent of sanctification of which it can take no cognizance, and which consequently it cannot enforce.

The sanctification of a day of which a nation can take cognizance, and which it is able to enforce, though it by no means amounts to Scriptural sanctification, is amply sufficient for all the civil, moral, and religious purposes for which the right of constituting a national sabbath is claimed for the civil power ; and the Sabbatarian will cheerfully forward its views to the extent I have before stated, while at the same time he withholds from the first day that private and mental regard which he thinks are due only to the seventh day, and which conscience obliges him to pay to it, even if he has no means of worshipping God in public, in opposition to all worldly and religious disadvantages whatsoever.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Differences of Opinion concerning the Importance of the Grounds on which Sanctification is claimed for a Day as the Weekly Sabbath, and its obtaining that Sanctification.*

THERE have been many excellent pieces written by pious observers of the first day in this country, both Churchmen and Dissenters, concerning the mode in which the weekly sabbath ought to be sanctified. I most cordially agree with them in their ideas on this subject ; and can truly say, that it is my desire and aim thus to keep the day which, I believe, the Blessed God has set apart for sanctification.

With respect to the first day, it is easy to see that the efforts of the writers just alluded to to get it sanctified in the manner in which the Scriptures direct the sabbath to be kept, are calculated to succeed with those only who admit the first day to be the Scriptural sabbath. That indeed seems to be the case of all who profess the Christian religion—except the few whose sentiments on the subject accord with my own. Nothing more, therefore, seems necessary to be done by the reprover or admonisher who wishes to extend the sanctification of the first day beyond what the

civil power proposes, or is even able to effect, than to point out the defects and faults with which too many are chargeable relative to sanctifying the day they acknowledge to be the sabbath, to paint in the strongest colours the heinous sin of sabbath-breaking—and if they cannot allure them by representing the pleasures and advantages of real religion both here and hereafter, at least to aim at working on their fears, by menacing them with the awful judgments of God upon them for their profanity.

But I wish to ask whether these means, suitable as they appear to be to the end, are, when used, (as they frequently have been,) in a considerable degree, if at all, successful? If they are not, (as the answer will possibly be,) is the failure to be ascribed wholly to the obduracy of the offenders and to the power of temptation, or in part at least to the deficiency of the means themselves? Should not the very proper address made to the understanding and to the passions just stated, be accompanied by a powerful appeal to the judgment, respecting the nature and the adequacy of the evidence by which the day that so loudly calls for sanctification is proved to be the Scriptural sabbath? It may be said that there is no occasion to prove that which is admitted to be true, and that an attempt to remove doubts where none exist, is the ready way to produce them. This ac-

quiescence, however, on their part, may be owing to carelessness, obsequiousness, and credulity, rather than to knowledge and conviction; and though it may be as operative in the former case as in the latter on the practice, when unopposed by inclination or interest, yet where it is so strongly opposed by them as in the instance of not keeping the sabbath, the acquiescence will produce no effect at all, if it does not receive support and strength from arguments tending to evince its justice. The divinity of the Scriptures is admitted and unimproved by multitudes. If, however, any of this description were to be warned to ‘flee for refuge from the wrath to come to the hope set before them in the gospel,’ they would soon ask, ‘What sign’ do the Scriptures ‘show, that we may see and believe?’ To this question, (which, when put with a serious view to information and spiritual improvement, is not unreasonable,) a solid answer must be returned, if it be wished that the result, with the blessing of God, should be happy. The like, I imagine, must be done in the case of the man who does not sanctify the first day, though he does not openly question whether it be the sabbath by divine appointment.

I shall now suppose that enough has been said to show the propriety and importance of stating clearly and strongly, though briefly, the evidence



of the day's being the Scriptural sabbath for which sanctification is claimed, notwithstanding the general acquiescence of the country in the justice of the claim. Let the advocate for it advert to this evidence, as well from Scripture as from other quarters, and to the tendency of its different parts to produce the sanctification in question. The following enumeration will, I believe, comprehend them: the great and good events that happened on the first day—particularly that of our Lord's resurrection; the religious acts performed by the apostle Paul, in conjunction with the disciples at Troas, on that day, and his injunction relative to it; the appellation of Lord's day in the Revelation; the encomiums of the ancient Fathers and Councils on it, and their recommendations of it both by precept and example, as highly proper for a festival; the solemn opinions of learned and pious men among the moderns in favour of its sanctity; the observance of it by Christendom in general, particularly since the beginning of the fourth century; the reasonableness, utility, and necessity, of the nation's appointing a weekly sabbath, and its having appointed that, as well as the seventh day, and enforced its enactment by penalties; and, finally, the first day's coincidence with the seventh part of time as well as the seventh day, which day was ordered by the Divine Being to

be sanctified, both at the close of the creation, and in the Fourth Commandment.

These are, I believe, the principal, if not all the arguments adduced in favour of the first day's claim to sanctification; and some, if not all of them, have been brought forward by each advocate in modern times for its sanctification, though for the most part not so distinctly, fully, and forcibly, as I think the case required. But let me proceed with their natural bearing on the minds of the profane.

Of the arguments just enumerated, those that are least likely to impress the thinking as well as the irreligious, are the sentiments and exhortations of wise and pious writers of the two last centuries. With all their wisdom and piety, they were not more infallible than the persons whom they addressed. Some of them, indeed, filled high offices in the Church, and in those offices were eminently honourable and useful: but the veneration attaching to their characters does not entitle them to implicit credit; and their authority as spiritual pastors of a superior order is adapted to influence those only who acknowledge it. The proofs from Scripture produced by such men are entitled to peculiar care in examining them, but not to reception without examination.

The plea for the first day founded on the opi-

nions and practice of the ancient Fathers and Councils, derives its chief strength from their antiquity, and from their proximity to the apostolic age. But the plea is more fit for a Roman Catholic than for a Protestant. It sounds strange in the ears of one who professes the Bible to be his religion, to be referred to Tradition, to Fathers, and to Councils, for any part of his religious faith or practice. The Fathers were men of sense and learning; but in general they indulged their fancies more than they exercised their intellectual powers. They excelled in rhetoric more than in logic. They were good men rather than great men, and are more entitled to our esteem as martyrs for divine truth, than as searchers into it. They knew better how to enforce the Scriptures than how to explain or defend them, and will answer our purpose much better as examples in practice, than as guides in theory.

The judgment of such men would not be very valuable concerning the sense of Holy Writ on the subject in question, were it professed to be founded on Scripture, and decidedly in favour of sanctifying Sunday exclusively and wholly. How much less must it answer the purpose for which it is brought forward, when it as strongly recommends and enjoins the seventh day as it does the first; when its language relative to the first implies only that a part should be kept; and when

it never appeals to Scriptural authority even for this partial sanctification !

The united sentiments and conduct of Christians in general on behalf of Sunday for so many centuries, and those of real Christians also, divided as they have been in opinion on a variety of other topics, are certainly calculated to make a deep impression upon ‘the many,’ who are apt to think more of a custom’s existence, continuance, and widely-extended reception, than of the causes to which it owes its origin and prevalence. It is no new thing for human tradition, when made of equal authority with the divine law, at length to supersede it. By observing the first day as well as the seventh, the Christians in the first ages stood a better chance of not being mistaken for Jews in the persecution every where raised against the latter, than if they had kept the seventh day alone. No one can justly think it any great recommendation of the first day that Rome and Alexandria should have constantly kept it exclusively, or that they should in a course of time influence the other cities of the Roman Empire to do the same, when he recollects, that neither a great, wealthy, and splendid metropolis, nor a distinguished seat of learning, is the best place in the world for preserving or propagating religion in its purity.

But that which completed the triumph of the

first day through the whole civilized world on its becoming Christian, was, the edicts of Constantine and his successors, in conjunction with the decrees of Councils, which ordered the observance of the first day; from which time its 'sister,' though hitherto regarded almost as extensively as itself,\* suddenly disappeared, and was never more heard of, in Europe at least, till the era of the Reformation.

Can the general concurrence of Christians in favour of the first day, obtained by the same means by which it was obtained for the errors and superstitions of Popery, render its claim to sanctification unquestionable? Ought their tame acquiescence in the justice of this claim during the blindness and torpor of the dark ages

\* So it has been generally supposed: but in reality it disappeared, as already shown, very gradually. Beside the sacred regard mentioned in a former note to have been paid for many centuries (and which perhaps is still paid) to the seventh day in the Latin and Greek Churches, Mr. Robinson, in his 'History of Baptism,' speaks of a sect of 'Jewish Christians' among the Waldenses: and Mosheim speaks of a similar sect among them in the 12th century. Benedict, (an American,) in his 'History of the Baptists,' vol. ii. p. 414, speaks of Seventh-day Baptists in Transylvania when Sigismund was king—I suppose in the 14th century. Dr. Buchanan, in his 'Researches,' p. 158, 160. speaks of the Armenian Christians as observing the seventh day as their sabbath.



—an acquiescence which began to be powerfully attacked as soon as ever the corruptions of that period were attacked, and that with considerable success in the course of the two late centuries—to go by the respectable appellation of rational conviction? Or can it reasonably create surprise, that public opinion should be more reluctant to seek after and to comply with divine truth in a minor point, than in an essential of religion—especially when a sentiment or practice that has long and generally prevailed not only holds out the most flattering lures to its adherents, but threatens those who quit it with the most serious inconveniences?

Were it, therefore, less certain than it is, that the purity of a fountain cannot always be inferred from the length of the stream issuing from it, nor the excellent quality of the water from its abundance, there is too much reason to suspect that the general concurrence of fallible and imperfect beings, (however worthy the character or considerable the talents of many of them may be,) in the case of the day observed by them as the Scriptural sabbath, is not so unquestionably the result of a careful, diligent, and impartial examination of the word of God on the subject, as to exempt any one from the obligation to search it each one for himself.

The necessity for keeping some day or ano-

ther in a week, for civil, moral, and religious purposes, and of a nation's fixing on the day for the general convenience, and the enforcing its observance by civil penalties, is certainly an argument of weight for any enactment of the kind referred to short of instituting a sabbath. But it is evident that a nation cannot secure for any day that private and mental regard, without which, whatever external and public respect is shown to it, it does not receive the sanctification which, according to the Scriptures, is due to a sabbath; even if such an extensive sanctification were necessary (which is not the case) to the attainment of the great and good ends proposed by the act of the Legislature in question. The day never can present itself with divine authority to the mind, except when it either coincides with the Scriptural day, or can plead a Scriptural commission given to the civil power for that purpose; and the decision of these questions must be left to each individual for the regulation of his own conduct in secret. In the real sanctification, therefore, of a day by the subject, the nation can only act a part subordinate to his conscience at most; and when his conscience does interest itself at all, or differs in opinion concerning the Scriptural sabbath from the nation, all the country can justly claim, and in fact all that it thinks of claiming, is the exter-

nal and public observance of the day which it has appointed, so far as relates to secular business or pleasure.

If the sanctification which is claimed for the first day were placed only upon such grounds as have hitherto been mentioned, whatever species of guilt the withholdment of that part of it which alone man can take cognizance of and punish may come under, I do not see how it can be proved to be profane and impious, as those sins are which are committed immediately against God—such as is a breach of any one of the three first commandments. In the case supposed, that is, of a person who, after proper inquiry, thinks either that there is no Scriptural sabbath, or that the first day is not that sabbath, he that merely does not keep the day privately and mentally, is not guilty of an offence at all. In acting contrary to a human law relative to the public observance of the day, he does commit an offence—a high offence if you will; for he not only disobeys the civil power in a case where it is exercised lawfully, which is itself a public injury, and a ‘resisting the ordinance of God,’ but he disobeys it in a case which the Legislature thinks is highly important to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the subjects at large. But whether the offence would equal in enormity and atrocity the sin of sabbath-breaking, or expose

the delinquent to the peculiar vengeance of Heaven both in this world and the world to come, as that sin is conceived to do, is another affair. The requisitions of the civil power relative to religion are not all sanctioned by Inspiration, as they were among the Jews, under their prophets. A civil offence, even in an affair of religion, may not be an offence committed immediately against God, more than another offence. Supposing the first day to depend for its claim to sanctification on no other grounds than those already stated, the secularization of it by business or pleasure is a crime to be ranked rather with the violation of the religious fasts and feasts that are also (and have equally been so for ages) appointed by the country for the moral and spiritual improvement of its inhabitants, than with the violation of the Fourth Commandment under the former dispensation.

In order, therefore, to fix, with justice, the infamous stigma of profanity and of sabbath-breaking on the non-observance of the first day according to law, and to prove the offender's exposure to divine vengeance, it will be necessary to mention the arguments hitherto produced for it only as secondary, and subsidiary to reasons of an infinitely higher nature. The divine authority of its claim to sanctification from Scripture ought to be chiefly insisted upon and proved by every speaker or writer who would address the non-observers

of it on the atrocity and peculiar danger of their conduct with justice and effect. It is not enough for them to say that men of piety and learning in general—that the ancient Fathers—that the Christian world at large—and that the laws of the country, account the day to be sacred : they must show also that the sentiment and practice in question are founded in Scripture, and that they are totally different from the errors and corruptions that were introduced into the Christian religion soon after, if not during the time of the apostles, and which were by no means wholly separated from it at the Reformation. They must show that the obedience due to the state respecting the observance of Sunday, is enjoined upon the people whom they address by an authority infinitely more awful than that of human laws. They must not only call Sunday the weekly sabbath, but prove from the Scriptures that it is so, and endeavour to move and influence the minds of men not merely by solemnity of manner, but by the weight of matter ; not by dogmatical assertion, but by incontrovertible reasoning.

Whether the arguments generally adduced from Scripture to prove that the obligation to keep the first day is clothed with divine authority are sufficient, will best appear by looking back to that part of this Work in which the question is discussed. The great and good event of our



Lord's resurrection happened on the first day, and he met with his disciples once, or perhaps twice, on it; but how do these circumstances make or prove the first day a weekly sabbath, more than his meeting with his disciples, his blessing them, his ascending, and his being exalted, on Thursday, make or prove that to be one? No inspired writer intimates that the day was on these accounts henceforth to be called 'Lord's day,' or to be treated as sacred either in whole or in part.\*—Were it necessary to show that it was lawful for Christians to meet together for the purpose of 'breaking bread,' (supposing the phrase to mean celebrating the Lord's Supper,) the example of the disciples and of the apostle Paul at Troas is certainly adequate to the purpose; but if the object be to show, not the lawfulness of these acts, but the incumbent duty of performing them on the first day, on account of its being the weekly sabbath, where is the proof that the disciples and the apostle considered the day in that light, or that this was the reason of their assem-

\* The creation, that occupied the six first days of the first week, was a work sufficiently great and good to justify the Divine Being's appointing the next day, on which he rested from it, the weekly sabbath. But without notice of that appointment, no one would have been warranted in concluding that it was to be so considered and applied, or would ever have thought of doing so.

bling and acting on it as they did? The acts themselves imply no such thing.

The private act of pious benevolence which the apostle Paul enjoins on Sunday (1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.) on certain churches during a certain period, was under the necessity of being performed either after terminating the secular labours of one week, or before the commencing the labours of another week. Had the order been given for Friday, would that have proved Friday to be the weekly sabbath? If not, why should its being given for the first day, prove that to be a sabbath? There is no hint given here, any more than in Acts 20. 7., that the act enjoined on the first day was on account of its being the sabbath; nor can the act itself prove it. Indeed the secular act requisite to it, and which is not forbidden immediately to precede it, (as it was natural for it to do,) is not very suitable to a sabbath. The selection of the same day for this temporary though weekly act, as that on which the meeting at Troas was held, cannot make or prove it to be the weekly sabbath, without notice from Inspiration to that effect. No other day except the seventh day had at the time its appropriate name; and a day that had this advantage was fitter for a circular, like the order in question, than one that could not be designated but by a circumlocution. The seventh day, if still the sabbath, would not

have been fit for such an act, on account of the act before mentioned that necessarily preceded it.\*

These private sequestrations were enjoined, as before noticed, only on some churches, were to answer a temporary purpose, and would not have been heard of, (and of course not the day on which they were to take place,) had it not been for the contingent occasion. The meeting, too, at Troas, is not stated to have been ever repeated, and would likewise probably not have been heard of, had it not been for the affair of Eutychus. Would these incidents have been recorded thus indirectly, and have been thus exposed to the hazard of omission, had they been intended to announce a new institution, never before glanced at? They however imply no such thing.

The circumstances that distinguish Sunday from Thursday or Friday, are not great and good events happening upon it, or Christ's meeting

\* The apostle's sole object seems to have been to secure the weekly performance of this private act. Provided the sequestration took place weekly, for aught that appears it made no difference to him on which day it took place. He only named a day, lest that which might be done any day, should not be done at all. Proper as the act itself, detached from its preceding adjunct, was for a sabbath, it is less calculated to assist in proving the consecration of a day than any other, because it is so very common on any day.

with or blessing his disciples upon it, or the performance of religious acts, even that of 'breaking bread,' upon it. [Acts 2. 46.] The distinctions are, that the first day is named, and that it was appointed for a private act of pious benevolence to be performed by some churches, and which might possibly be repeated for several weeks. As to the first day's being named, it alone had a name, (except the seventh day,) it being convenient that it should have one for stating the day of the resurrection, which there was frequent occasion to mention, without a circumlocution. Its having a name, too, fitted it for the circular, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. The nature of the act enjoined confined it to the first or the seventh day. It is not very extraordinary that the same day in different weeks should have different religious acts performed upon it for a while. The act enjoined was the least calculated of any to convey the idea of a sabbath respecting the day of performance. At most it would occupy only a few minutes; and it does not follow, from the evening of the Sunday being spent in public devotion at Troas, that there was public devotion every Sunday in other churches, and much less that the day was devoted to religion, and that weekly.

The pious acts performed, according to Acts 20. 7. and 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. occupied only a small part of the different first days to which they re-

late. Neither an order to sanctify the day, nor any other mode, is employed, that indicates the observance of the whole day. The expression, therefore, 'Lord's day,' Rev. 1. 10. (supposing it to be written by the apostle John, and to mean a day the whole of which was sacred,) whatever day it refers to, cannot by any fair rule of interpretation be referred to the first day. Indeed I know of no day to which, taken in its connexion with the rest of the New Testament, it can be justly applied, except to the seventh day, as was said before more at large:

For the reasons just given, I must consider the arguments in favour of the first day's claim to sanctification drawn from the New Testament, taken separately, as mere ciphers; and, as I have observed before, a number of ciphers put together, were they ever so many, will amount only to nothing, except there be a significant figure on the proper side of them. How totally void of weight do they appear, compared with those which support the divine institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper! Their insufficiency is owned by King Charles the First, and by some of the greatest divines both here and abroad. The perpetuity of these institutions beyond the apostolic age has been questioned, and supported by much the same means as that of the seventh day sabbath is, namely, their reason and utility remaining the



same, and the want of Scriptural notice to the contrary: but the fact of their institution has never been questioned.

The appeals made in favour of the same day to the Old Testament, amount at most only to a proof that the first day, had it been instituted in the New Testament, would not have been unlike the former institution in one particular, being equally a seventh part of time as much as the seventh day. But the Old Testament certainly does not institute the first day; and therefore if it be instituted by divine authority, it must be instituted in the New Testament, and must derive its claim to sanctification solely from that institution, and not from the sanctification enjoined in the Old Testament relative to another day. The institution in Genesis 2. 2, 3. plainly means the last day of the week, and no other. The Fourth Commandment likewise refers to the last day of the week exclusively; so it was always understood to mean before our Lord's resurrection.

Whether this summary of the proofs from Scripture of the alleged right of the first day to sanctification, when laid before those who follow their worldly business and pleasures on the day, will be likely to convince them that they ought not only to keep it as much as the laws require, but even to sanctify it in the sense of Scripture, or that their violation of the laws contains in it the

heinousness and incurs the danger of the sin of sabbath-breaking, I must leave others to judge. It will be said by some, perhaps, that by exciting doubts in minds where there were none, and furnishing with objections and arguments people who had none before, I have been encouraging them in transgressing the laws relative to Sunday, instead of promoting obedience to them as I profess to do. But, in my opinion, to keep persons ignorant of the grounds of duty is not the way to enforce the practice of it; nor is it the way to secure or obtain for Sunday its just right, to demand for it more than it has a right to. I am not conscious to myself that I have been 'walking in craftiness,' or 'handling the word of God deceitfully:' on the contrary, by manifestation of what I verily believe to be 'the truth,' I have been 'commending myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' As a Protestant, I regard the maxim that 'ignorance is the mother of devotion,' as no less degrading to human nature, servile, and temporary in its operation, than it is absurd, impious, and calculated only to render men formalists and hypocrites. The expedient of addressing thoughtlessness, sloth, implicit faith, and the passions, without enlightening the understanding and convincing the judgment, has been tried long enough, in the hope of producing a regard for Sunday according to law. As that

has failed, let the expedient of addressing reason out of the Scriptures be tried. The disregard lamented by the pious claimants of sanctification for the first day may be more generally owing to want of conviction that it has a right to it, than is commonly imagined.

Once more I repeat, that I have no doubt of the right of Sunday to regard, so far as the law can enforce regard, or in fact claim it. But I must be allowed to say, that could its right to Scriptural sanctification be proved, that would tend infinitely to strengthen and give effect to the national enactment. What I think of the Scriptural claim has been already stated at large. How incomparably superior to it is the ground, in my opinion, on which the claim of the seventh day to be kept holy by Christians stands. Its claim rests upon the ground of the institution in Paradise, and repeated in the Fourth Commandment, which is allowed by its opponents still to continue in force, though that could not be were the seventh day repealed. The glorious work of the creation, the rest after which is the only cause assigned to mankind for its institution, and which is the primary and chief cause of its being given a second time with the rest of the Decalogue to the Jews in particular, still continues in being; and as much concerns the moderns as the ancients, the rest of the world as it does the Jews, the Christian dis-

pensation as it did the two former dispensations. It has no other memorial except the seventh day, whereas the work of redemption has two; and that day is as fully competent to any purpose for which the first day is ever applied, as the first or any other day can be. The want of records concerning the actual observance of it by the ancient Patriarchs and Gentiles cannot disprove the fact of its existence, and of their obligation to keep it, even if Mr. Wright, Dr. Jennings, and Dr. Rees, in his *Encyclopædia*, under the word ‘Week,’ did not produce a variety of authors both before and since the time of Christ in support of their regarding it in one way or in another. The repeal of it cannot be proved by any text which will not fairly bear another sense, and which will not, if taken literally, do away all sabbaths as well as the seventh day sabbath. There is no proof of the day having ever been secularized by an apostle or by the first Christians; on the contrary, there is proof that pious acts were performed on it by Christians as Christians, even that of ‘breaking bread,’ because they were performed by them daily. Acts 2. 46. Though it was necessary for the apostles to tell the Jews and the Gentiles that there was a change respecting the weekly sabbath, (supposing that there was such a change,) because otherwise they could not know it, not having reason to expect it; yet it was not necessary

to tell either of them that a law continued in force which both have always been under an obligation to regard, and which the Gentiles, when they became Jewish proselytes, regarded as a matter of course, if they did not do so before—the reason stated for the institution remaining just the same, and there being nothing in the change of dispensation to make them think otherwise. The apostles had matters of too much importance to speak of to the Gentiles, to take up the time by speaking of the sabbath, their duty relative to which they could not fail of finding in Genesis 2. 2, 3. and the Fourth Commandment, if they did not know and practise it already. It cannot be inferred that the Christians did not keep the seventh day, from there being no specific instance of it mentioned in the inspired writings; because a law is always supposed to be regarded as usual, which is known to have long existed and to have been long obeyed, and of the repeal of which there is no account—especially since the silence can easily be explained by the absence of the apostles from the Christian assemblies on missionary duty at the synagogues—the want, in consequence, of any extraordinary or miraculous occurrence at them—and the omission of common events, which was required in a detail of principal matters so concise as that given by the sacred writers. That they did keep it, appears from the



pacific conduct of the Jews, whether believers or unbelievers, who were too strongly attached to the sabbath to have acquiesced quietly in its repeal, had there been any ; and also from the existence of Christians who kept it in the age succeeding that of the apostles, whose practice the Fathers never speak of as a novelty, or as a revival of something obsolete. In a word, as conjecture and presumption are not sufficient grounds for the admission of a new law, neither are they sufficient grounds for the abandonment of an old one.

Such is the summary of the arguments for the continuance and universal obligation of the seventh day sabbath. How can any one justly call it the Jewish sabbath in any sense, except as he uses the phrases Jewish Scriptures and Jewish God,\* when a Christian sabbath distinct from the Jewish one is unknown to the New Testament, which gives the title of sabbath exclusively to the seventh day ? What amazing force would this chain of reasoning add to the enactment of the Legislature relative to sanctifying the first day,

\* Jehovah at one time condescended to stand in the relation of a king to the Jews. Is he, then, the God of the Jews only ? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also ? In like manner, the seventh day answered particular purposes to the Jews, without losing its claim to the regard of the Gentiles.

and to the obligation of keeping it according to law, if it applied to the first day as it does to the seventh! Whether any of those who secularize Sunday externally and publicly are transgressors of that which they believe in their consciences to be a divine law, (as they undoubtedly are of a human law, and justly deserving of punishment for it, too,) I shall not say. But I have no hesitation in saying that the heinous guilt and peculiar danger attached to sabbath-breaking are unquestionably incurred, whenever the neglect or violation of the seventh day sabbath is persisted in in opposition to light, or to the duty of coming to the light—whether in the case of an individual, or of a society, small or great.

I close the Chapter with reciting a fragment of a prayer which a Sabbatarian was accustomed to offer the evening and the morning of his sabbath:—

‘———— I would call to mind the Creation, thy great and good work, though now marred, of which I am a part. I bless thee for making me wiser than the beasts that perish, and for all thou hast done for me these many years, praying for the continuance of thy mercies through the remainder of life—in death—and for ever. I would not substitute nature, chance, or human agency, for Thee, who art the only living and true God. I would see thy glory not only in the

upper and better world, but in this lower world—in thy conduct toward man and beast. Here thou didst accomplish the glorious work of redemption, without which, under the present apostate, guilty, wretched, and helpless circumstances of my nature, my being would inevitably prove a curse to me instead of a blessing. Here thou callest thy people, and fittest them for heaven. Here thou glorifiest thyself in them and by them. Enable me to co-operate knowingly, willingly, zealously, with thee, as the God of nature and providence, and more especially as the God of grace; and when thou shalt be pleased to remove me from this creation, or when it shall be burned, may I form a part of the new creation?——’

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### CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing pages it will, I hope, be seen, that I have confined myself to the subject as much as possible. Though I have declared my sentiments with the freedom that becomes a Protestant and an Englishman, much more a Christian and a Christian minister, yet I have endeavoured to treat with proper respect my opponents

of every description, whether the pious or those of the opposite character—whether Churchmen or Dissenters—whether Christendom or the British Public—(what fearful odds exist!) In particular, I have been very careful to say nothing incompatible with that obedience which I owe to the laws of my country. I have shown that my opinion and practice relative to the weekly sabbath are by no means hostile to that regard which the Legislature demands for Sunday.

There are numbers of people who could bear the inconvenience of paying that regard which all ought to pay to it while the law so stands, and yet keep the seventh day holy as well as I, were they in like manner convinced that it was the sabbath of the Lord their God. Were it otherwise, I am not certain that the Legislature would be unwilling, upon application to it, to let those work six days who thought themselves still required by the Fourth Commandment to sanctify the old sabbath. Though the symmetry of religion's public appearance on the first day might be marred a little by the measure, yet neither religion itself, nor any civil or moral purpose, would suffer any more than as they were injured when the Act of Uniformity and the Schism Bill were liberally and justly exchanged for the Acts of Toleration.

Thus the tendency of the foregoing pages is

not to encourage the non-observance of Sunday in opposition to law, whatever tendency they may have to induce the Legislature to alter the law, so far as the law withholds from the Sabbatarians that liberty which is given to them by the Fourth Commandment. I have strongly and repeatedly inculcated obedience to the law in this particular, so long as the law continues as it is. Independent, however, of the law, the first day observer has no more a right to incommode or to grieve a Sabbatarian by labouring on his day, than the Sabbatarian has to incommode or to grieve the other by labouring on the other's day. The sensibility of the Sabbatarian to offences against the sanctity of his day, is no less acute than that of the first day observer to offences against the sanctity of his; and though it would be wounded in a body of people in an infinitely greater number of instances, were the Sabbatarian to obtain his just rights, than it is now, yet the shocks given to each individual would be infinitely fewer than those which are every week given to him. Important as public opinion, fashion, and general example, are in civil matters, they ought not to have any weight in an affair that lies entirely between God and the soul.\*

\* The multitude of fellow-sufferers in the case supposed, calculated as it may be to strike the eye of a spectator or a



I am, then, to be considered not as hostile to the first day, but as an advocate for the seventh day.—Whether I am right or wrong in my notion concerning the day that is the Scriptural sabbath, no one can justly say that the question is unimportant. As long as the Fourth Commandment is recognized by Christians as a precept still in force—as long as it is stated to be so without the least alteration of the matter or modification of the form of words in which it stood originally in the Decalogue—so long it must be a matter of consequence to inquire what day of the week is meant by the seventh day. As long as the pious exclaim against the heinous and dangerous sin of sabbath-breaking, so long it must be important to inquire what the sin is, and who the person is that commits it.

In supporting the seventh day sabbath, I am

philosopher, is a circumstance that tends not to increase, but to diminish the suffering of each individual. The evils which each individual feels are few : they only become many when he thinks of the evils suffered by others, which he does not feel. This would probably be admitted, were the first and seventh days ever to exchange situations. What is the number of evils actually felt by an observer of the first day, compared with that of similar evils encountered by every Sabbatarian? Ought the wounds that are suffered merely by fancy, if not by something worse, to prove the occasion of real injury and temptation?

indeed advocating the cause of a weekly sabbath in general, more than many are aware of. There are, as I have had repeated occasion to notice before, those (and I suspect that their number is far greater than is known) who, though they are firm in denying that any except the Jews ever did keep or were bound to keep the seventh day, or at least that it is obligatory upon Christians, yet are equally firm in denying that the first day is a sabbath by divine authority. What is this but denying that there is any sabbath binding upon conscience, and depriving a nation of the power, let it consecrate what day it will, to appeal to Scripture in aid of its own enactment? My sentiment, on the other hand, that the seventh day is still the Scriptural sabbath, leaves the nation at full liberty, if it pleases, with regard to that day, to support and strengthen human by divine authority.\*

\* There is not the smallest evidence, in my opinion, that the Scriptures leave the civil power at liberty to fix the day for the weekly sabbath, indicating that whatever day that may be, it is binding upon the privacies and the thoughts of all its subjects, as well as upon their public and external conduct. If it be said that though Revelation does not require this, Reason does, I answer that all which reason requires (and it is extremely doubtful, to say the least, whether it would have ever thought even of this, had it not been for Revelation) is an enactment of the legislature that should pre-

The length and complex nature of the preceding discussion are owing to the many topics which curiosity has unnecessarily, though not unnaturally, introduced. If the institution in Genesis 2. 2, 3. be real, inserted in the natural place, and mentioned no sooner than it was needed

mote humanity, morality, and religion, throughout the nation weekly. But mere reason does not inculcate the devotion of the privacy and secret thoughts to religion, on those accounts, during the whole of the twenty-four hours at once. Personal religion, indeed, is important at these times for a man's acting his part in society with a view to the promotion of the aforesaid objects, and perhaps a larger and more frequent exercise of it on those occasions than at other times—especially as upon the present supposition there is no other day in the week that claims these attentions from him; but not that entire exclusion of worldly business and pleasure which the weekly sabbath, according to the Scriptures, demands. Without the injunction of Revelation, it does not appear to me that nature, reason, expediency, or any thing else, would suggest a national or any other sabbath, like what I conceive a Scriptural sabbath to be, if it suggested any sabbath at all. It would scarcely of itself suggest that external, public, and partial regard for some days, more or fewer, which the laws demand and can enforce for the first day, and which is fully competent to answer every purpose which society can be supposed to have in view. The importance of a Scriptural weekly sabbath appears solely from God's having at the beginning fixed the day for it; and if he has withdrawn that day without substituting another, such a sabbath has ceased to be important.

by man, it is no matter whether there are any records of his keeping the day or not. If the Fourth Commandment be only a repetition of that institution—if it has but one meaning, namely, the weekly sanctification of a specific day, for a specific reason which is stated and is applicable to no other day, (a meaning which it always had exclusively before our Lord's ascension, and after according to Luke's judgment, ch. 23. 56.)—and if the commandment be not repealed, (as Christians in general think,) it is of course the duty of Christians to keep the seventh day. If, in short, the phrase *Lord's day* (Rev. 1. 10.) cannot be applied to the first day without the help of Fathers and Councils, (though they never tell us that they are quoting Scripture in using the phrase, much less that the Scriptures warrant their application of it,) nothing more need be said; for the application cannot be admitted by any consistent Protestant.

Convinced as I feel of the soundness of my argument, I would by no means allow myself to doubt for a moment the possibility of another's considering it, and coming to an opposite conclusion, without the least discredit to his abilities or character. On the other hand, I cannot admit any right of dispensing, by myself or others, with the obligation to study and regard the will of God in all things. I am ready to allow that the

question I have been discussing is a minor point: but no conscientious mind will think that because such a point is of far less importance than some others, therefore it is of no importance at all.

The minor questions in religion are very differently situated with respect to the chance they stand for fair treatment. There are some which, though they rose from a small source, yet run rapidly, and spread themselves widely in their progress. The obstacles they meet with occur but seldom, and are overcome with comparative ease. Others are less favoured in each of these particulars. The Reformation was greatly assisted in advancing to its present prosperity, by the freedom of inquiry and of communicating sentiment which it allowed to learning and philosophy—by its friendly aspect toward the rights of princes and the independence of nations—and by its tendency to promote civil and religious liberty. The Dissent from an Establishment cannot of course hope to have a nation or the higher powers in its train: but in liberal times like these, it encounters no mighty obstacles in the way of attaining considerable wealth and respectability.

The questions which separate the Baptist Denomination from their Non-conforming brethren merely affect communion at the Lord's table, domestic economy, or personal convenience; and these but in a few cases comparatively. Sabba-



tarianism, on the contrary, may possibly deter a prudent man from venturing on a family, or interfere with its general regulations one whole day every week: it may withhold the means of training children to honourable and lucrative professions: it may prevent engaging or continuing in any respectable line of business; and may even threaten its votary with the want of conveniences, if not of necessities. It may, in fine, endanger the safety and prosperity of a church, the comforts and advantages of social and public worship, and the extensive or useful exercise of ministerial talents.

The peculiar disadvantages thus attending Sabatarianism will easily account for its low state, compared with that of any other minor point: but they will by no means prove the propriety or necessity of disregarding it.

Were it not true, as it is, that these evils are felt chiefly in times and places in which the Sabbatarians are few—that beside the just expectation of the divine blessing on every one who sacrifices the world to conscience, many sources of supply remain to the inventive, the industrious, the frugal, and the patient—and that there are instances not only of comfort, but of competence and even of affluence, among the Sabbatarians, as well as among other religious bodies, the sombre picture before drawn of their peculiar disadvantages,

will not, in my opinion, release any from the obligation they are under to inquire what the will of the Lord is in this particular, and to conform to it, whatever it may be, not ‘consulting with flesh and blood.’ What would a pious observer think of keeping Monday instead of Sunday, on the ground of convenience? Would he think that it signified little or nothing which day he kept; provided he kept one? How can he, then, in conscience, dispense with inquiring whether the Fourth Commandment does or does not really enjoin the observance of the seventh day, and no other, or with keeping it, if he finds that the fact is so? Duty will allow us a reasonable time for ‘setting our houses in order,’ and for ‘guiding our affairs with discretion,’ before compliance with it, but nothing further. I have known more than one noble case of this kind, and cases that were attended with a reward here, as well as with the fairest prospect of a reward hereafter. That policy which regards no minor point except as it is going forth ‘conquering and to conquer,’ or as it is consistent with worldly ease and pleasure, with profit and honour, with genteel connexions, with figure and influence in society—in a word, with civil and religious respectability, appears to me to ‘savour less the things that be of God, than the things that be of men.’ It is not very probable that the characters

in whom it predominated would have associated with the persecuted Non-conformists, or even with the persecuted Lollards. It is well if they would have met with the few Christians in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, just after our Lord's ascension, or have resorted with the women at Philippi to the river side where prayer was wont to be made ; if they would have associated with the seven thousand worshippers of the true God, rather than with the Baalites in Elijah's time ; or with Noah joined the eight in the ark, rather than have remained outside with an unbelieving world, that perished in the waters of the flood !

THE END.



ERRATUM.

Page 311, lines 17, 18. For *enjoined* read *enjoyed*.

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